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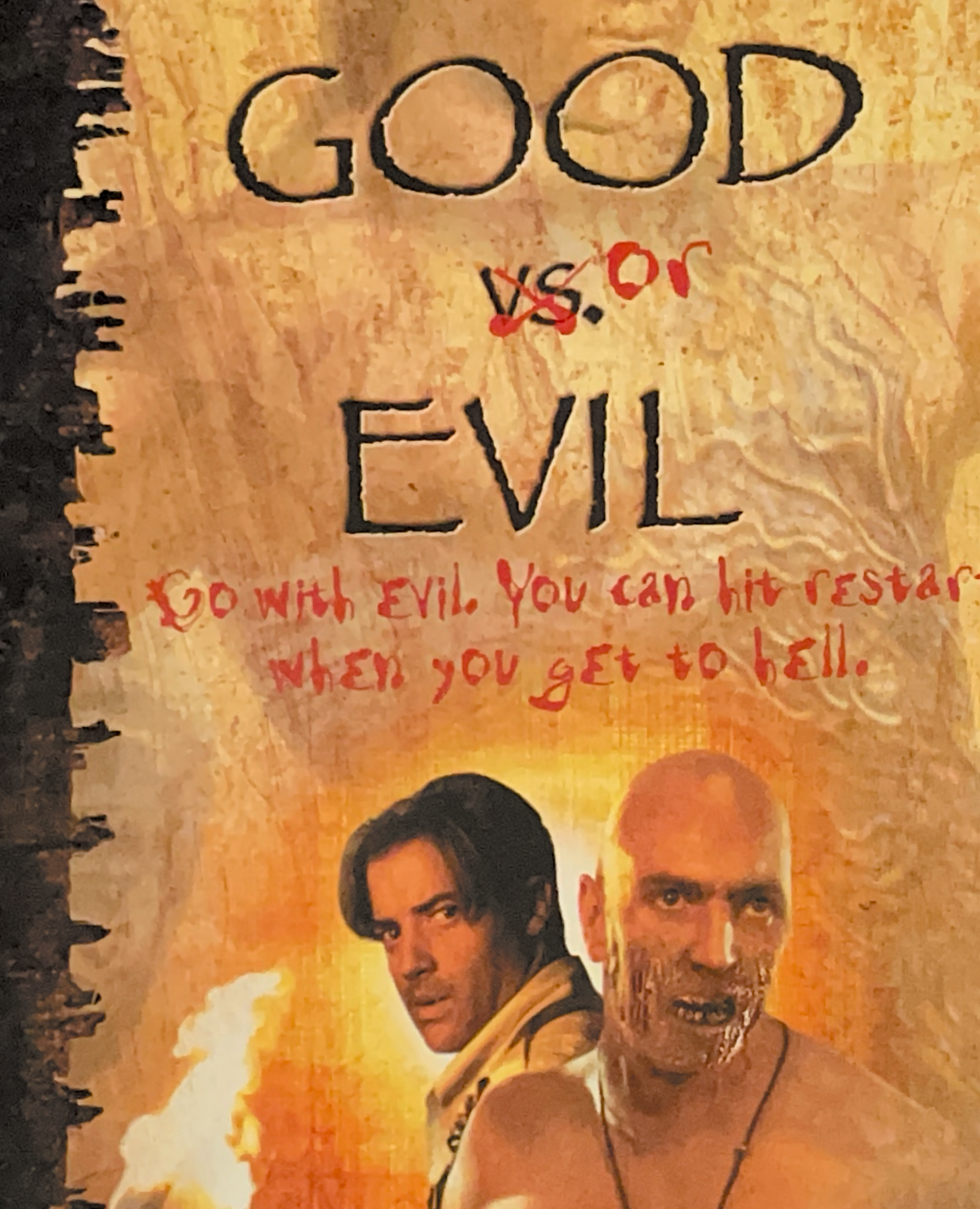

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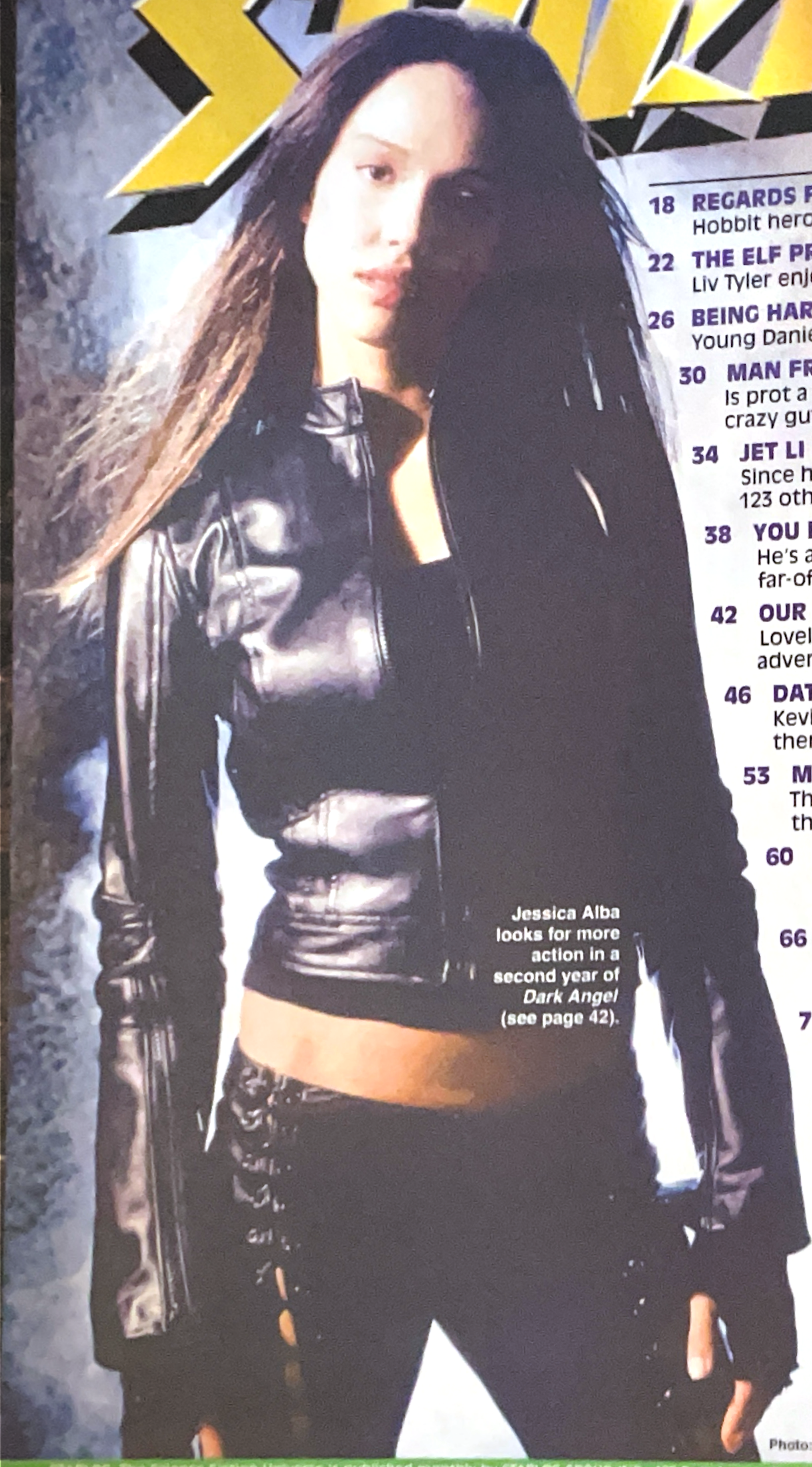

Jessica Alba looks for more action in a second year of *Dark Angel* (see page 42).

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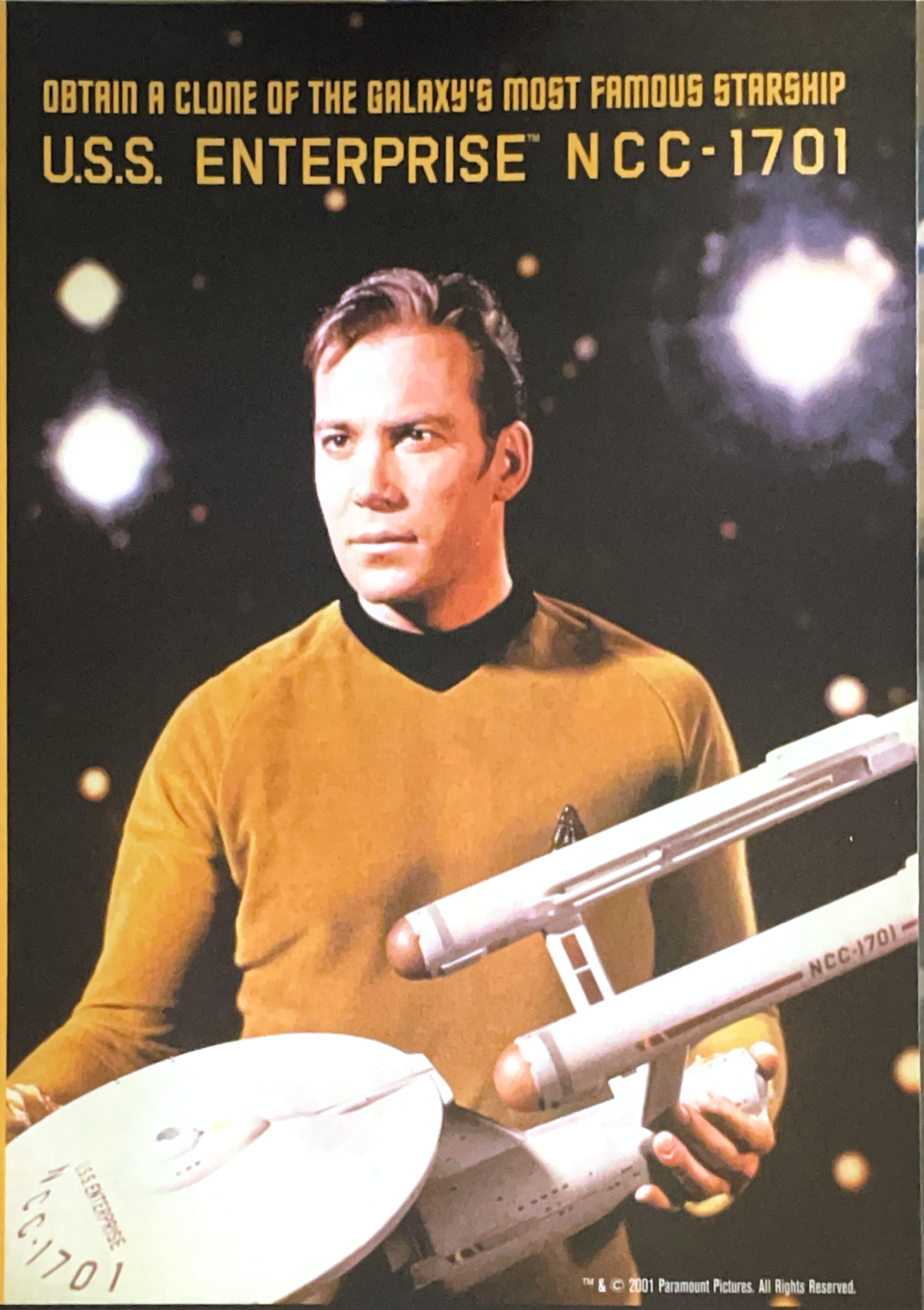

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POOR GUNMEN

...Fox has cancelled *The Lone Gunmen*, a spin-off from *The X-Files*, due to low ratings. *The X-Files* also suffered from low ratings its first two seasons, but was nurtured to become a ratings winner for Fox. *The Lone Gunmen*, though, was pushed around in time-slot musical chairs and was not promoted, causing confusion for fans wondering where the show was during its last few weeks, as *TV Guide* and the Sunday supplementals did not have it listed. Nor did Fox run promos for *The Lone Gunmen*. There is currently a countrywide Internet campaign to bring back *The Lone Gunmen* for a second season.

The fans—or Gunfen, as we are called—are calling, writing letters and mailing second season magnets and American flags to Fox Network President Gail Berman and Programming Director Sandy Grushaw, and to Fox's board of directors, which includes Chairman Rupert K. Murdoch. We're also writing to the advertisers, other networks and the print media. One fan has even mailed her TV set to Berman.

As *The Lone Gunmen* series progressed, the writing and storylines grew stronger, creating its own unique voice. With the support of the Fox Network, by way of a better time slot and more promotion, the creators (Chris Carter, John Shiban, Frank Spotnitz and Vince Gilligan) could make *The Lone Gunmen* a ratings winner.

Viewers want *The Lone Gunmen* back. "It's the right thing to do," for the network and the viewers.

Amy D. Jonas
Address Withheld

We miss The Lone Gunmen, *too. However, we must disagree with the assertion that it got no on-air promotion. We saw* lots *of promotional ads on Fox. Still, we would also like to see a second season.*

APE STUFF

...Yes, John Chambers did design the Oscar-winning ape masks for the original *Planet of the Apes*, as well as work on countless other shows, but he also won acclaim for his alien masks on *Lost in Space*—such as the alien luminaries seen in "Invaders from the Fifth Dimension," as well as multiple face masks of Dr. Smith in "The Space Destructors." You can also see a precursor of Chambers' ape mask in that episode, in which a prison ape alien makes life miserable for Smith and Major West after the primate escapes from a prison planet. Why this *wasn't* mentioned in the Chambers article is a mystery to me.

Christopher Krieg
www.geocities.com/ckrieg.geo//
The Jupiter 2 Technical Site

There is no mystery. The interview concentrated only *on his* Planet of the Apes *work. Other subjects were not discussed.*

...I just saw the new *Planet of the Apes*. It proves that sometimes you *can't* improve on the original. Director Tim Burton has bitten off more than he could chew this time around. Halfway into the film, I began to long for the original formula. Burton's film, marked by the visual grandeur that has always been his trademark, is saddled with a script that goes for the gag every time it can—often feebly.

This is done largely by quoting liberally from the 1968 film starring Charlton Heston, who appears here to deliver an ironic, albeit self-serving anti-gun message. "Damn them all to hell!" Heston bellows as Thade's ailing ape father, who knows the legacy of humankind. "Take your stinking hands off me, you damn dirty human!" Attar tells a beaten Mark Wahlberg, playing Air Force pilot Leo Davidson. That ape echoes this whole film. "Stinking" is too kind a word. Next time I want to see a *Planet of the Apes* film, I'll go into my archives and watch the original—and still the best—classic. As for remakes, "Well, damn them all to hell!"

Mark A. Kaufman
Freeport, NY

MISTS OF TIME

...Tell Dave McDonnell not to give up his editorial column. Someone has to lend perspective of time to today's readers. I enjoyed STARLOG #1 when it came out, and now, so many years later, I'm *still* reading the magazine. In many ways, it's a grand survivor of the great SF and fantasy explosion.

I'm still amazed (and grimly amused) at the explosion and exploitation of the genre over the years, and wonder if young readers are having as much fun as I did when I started reading fantasy three decades ago (outside of the *Harry Potter* phenomenon). The alacrity of marketers to provide everything you "want" (from tee-shirts to photos to swords/weapons/mugs/etc.) for a new show, or to lock an author into a series before they see if the book sells, is depressing.

Recently, I reread titles that I hadn't touched for 20 years, and was instantly sucked back into the worlds of Earthsea, Darkover, Gomrath and *The Lord of the Rings*. I'm happy to see them re-issuing early Andre Norton and compiling James H. Schmidt's short stories. Are these great books? Some are, some aren't. But they were upbeat and entertaining and generally showed a positive future.

I read all the way through Keith Olexa's article on *The Mists of Avalon* (#289) for a friend of mine who loved the book but unfortunately died of cancer two years ago. I'll probably watch some of the show to honor her spirit, but after that, it will have to hold my attention because the book never did—though I enjoyed Marion Zimmer Bradley's early titles!

L. C. Wells
Address Withheld

Art: "Big Bad Bubba"/Gag: Joe Nazzaro

DIRTY HARRY POTTER

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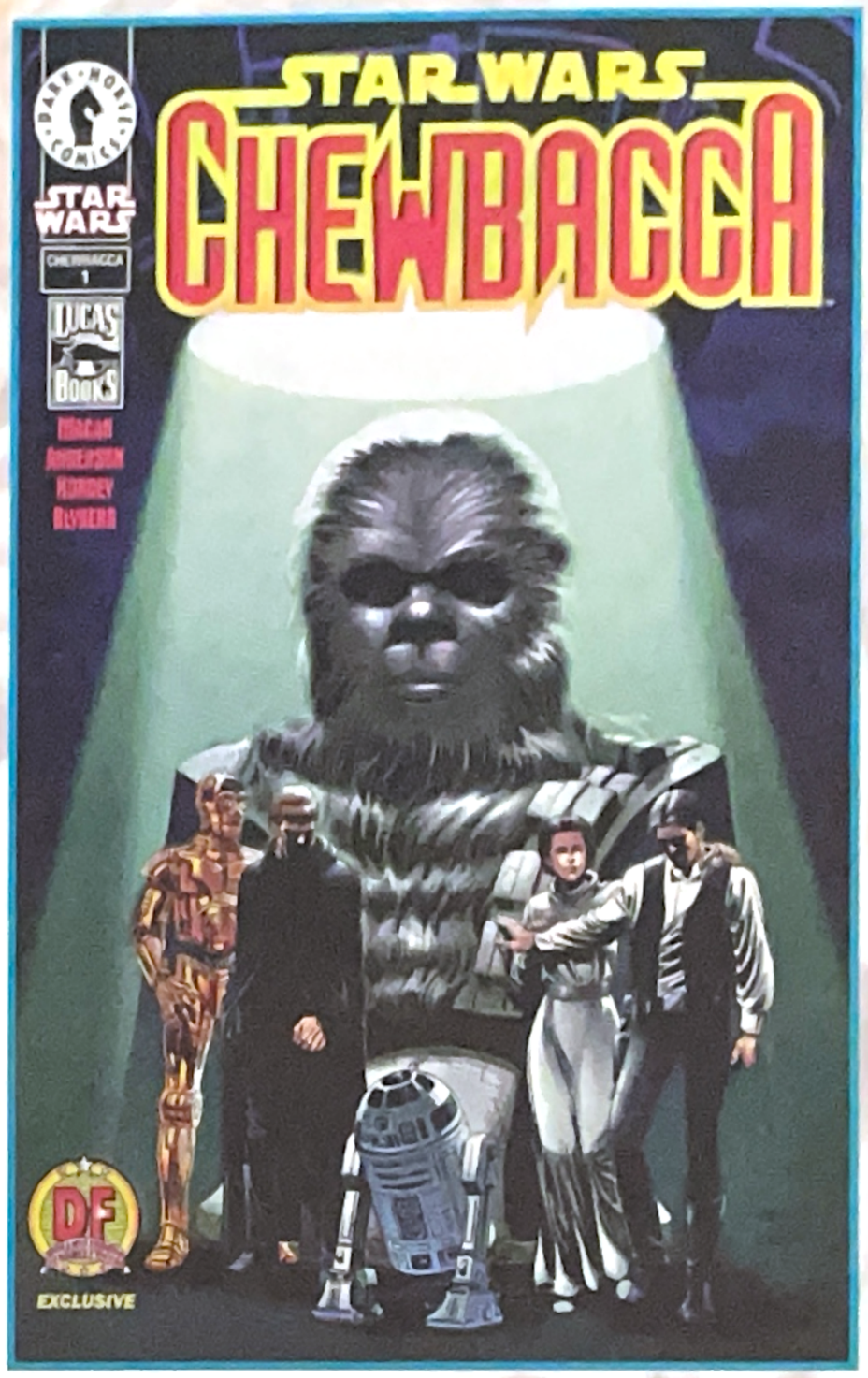

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MEDIALOG

By DAVID McDONNELL

GENRE TV

Tarzan is returning to television screens yet again. *Face/Off* screenwriters Mike Werb & Michael Colleary are scripting a pilot for producer Laura Ziskin. It's for the WB, so this is a *teenage* Tarzan. Rewriting Edgar Rice Burroughs' myth more than a little, the Ape Teen now lives in New York City, where he'll have urban jungle adventures.

Former STARLOG editorial staffer Ed Naha (who edited the first issue of FANGORIA under a pseudonym) went on to script *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* and later ran the *Honey* TV spin-off as well as the *Sinbad* series. He's writing the bible for a SCI FI Channel mini-series project set in an insane asylum. It's entitled *Mind Games*.

ABC broadcasts a two-hour documentary September 16 celebrating *Walt Disney: The Man Behind the Myth*.

CHARACTER CASTINGS

Tim Curry voices the Mouse King in the direct-to-video, computer-animated *Barbie in the Nutcracker*. It stars, of course, Barbie & Ken. Tchaikovsky must be *so* proud.

Julianne (TV's *The Others*) Nicholson has been added to the regular cast of *Ally McBeal* this fall. Also joining up is James Marsden, Cyclops of *X-Men* (STARLOG #277).

X-Men's Anna Paquin encounters *Darkness* in a genre flick directed by Jaume Balagueró for release by Dimension Films.

Famke Janssen, another *X-Men* veteran, co-stars in the movie version of TV's *I Spy* (which teams Owen Wilson & Eddie Murphy as the successors to Robert Culp & Bill Cosby).

Now and Again's Dennis Haysbert is running for President—and marked for assassination—in Fox's acclaimed new TV series *24* (it *all* takes place in a 24-hour period, each episode chronicling one hour of real time). Stephen (*Lost in Space*) Hopkins directed the pilot.

COMICS SCENE

British SF comics hero Dan Dare is returning in *Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future*, an all CG-animated, 26-episode series produced by *Dare* owner Colin Frewin. Foundation Imaging, a veteran at this stuff after *Roughnecks: Starship Troopers Chronicles*, realized the show. Greg Ellis voices Dare.

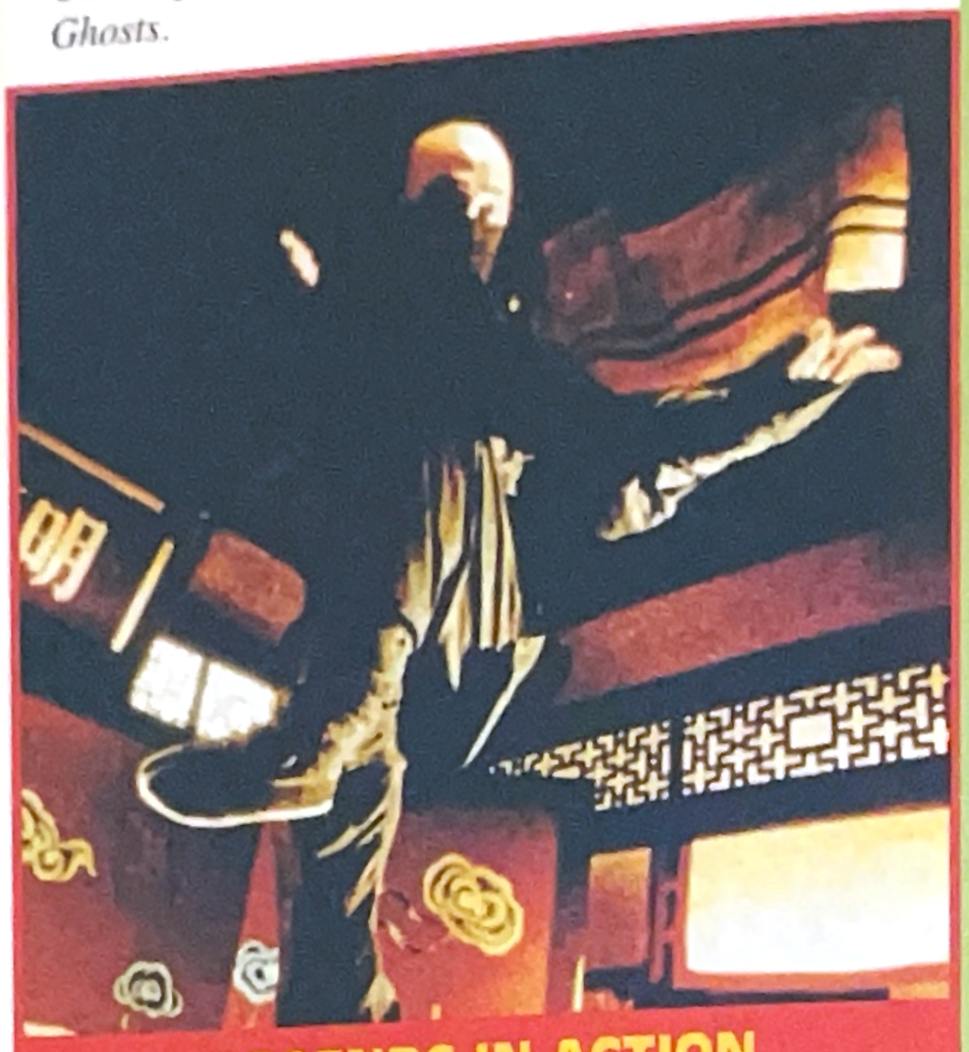
Rowan Atkinson reprises his role as *Mr. Bean* in 26 half-hour animated episodes of a spin-off series. It begins airing in England this fall.

The animated *JLA* premieres November 17 on the Cartoon Network.

CINEMAGIC

Sony Classical releases *Mythodea: Music for the NASA Mission: 2001 Mars Odyssey* on CD and tape October 23. It's a choral symphony by Vangelis (the composer known for *Blade Runner* and *Chariots of Fire*), which celebrates space exploration and Greek myths. It's specifically timed to NASA's current unmanned mission to Mars (NASA has made it the official TV theme music). There's also a DVD of the one-hour symphony's earlier premiere performance in Athens at the ancient Temple of Zeus (featuring opera stars Kathleen Battle & Jessye Norman, the London Metropolitan Orchestra, the Greek National Opera Choir and Vangelis). And, of course, a TV special version of that June 2001 concert will be seen on PBS next month.

John Williams did the score for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Howard Shore scored *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Trevor Jones composed *From Hell*, while Christopher Young provided the music for *13 Ghosts*.



Iron Monkey Photo: Miramax Films

LEGENDS IN ACTION

Director Yuen Woo-Ping—noted for his work as action choreographer of *The Matrix* movies—worked behind the camera on *Iron Monkey*. The 1993 film—only now being theatrically released in the U.S.—examines the legend of the mythical, Robin Hood-like action hero.

REMAKES & SEQUELS

If there was any ever doubt, we are *now* entering the ninth circle of movie hell. Why? Because George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*—only 22 years old—is to be remade. Already! James (*Scooby-Doo*) Gunn is scripting.

A remake of *The Boys from Brazil*, based on Ira Levin's Nazi-cloning thriller, is in the works. Original scripter Heywood Gould is involved, too.

The next James Bond film has a director (*Along Came a Spider*'s Lee Tamahori) and a script (by *The World Is Not Enough*'s Neal Purvis and Robert Wade).

UPDATES

The WB has cancelled *Baby Blues*—with six unaired leftover first season shows and 13 *completed* second year episodes in the vault. Bizarrely, thanks to accounting rules, it saves the network lotsa money to just write off this multi-million-dollar project *without* broadcasting these 19 half-hours.

Black Knight, a time-travel comedy starring Martin Lawrence, bows November 21. Its score is by Randy Edelman.

The delayed *Pluto Nash* is now targeted to premiere January 18.

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ANDROMEDA

Second season premieres in syndication the week of 9/30. Upcoming episodes: "The Widening Gyre," written by Robert Hewitt Wolfe, directed by Allan Eastman. "Exit Strategies," written by Matt Kiene & Joe Reinkemeyer, directed by T.J. Scott. "A Heart for Falsehood Framed," scripted by Ethlie Ann Vare. "All Too Human," directed by Scott. STARLOG visits the set on page 46.

ANGEL

Third season airs in a new fall time slot (Mondays, 9 p.m.) on the WB. Premieres 9/24.

BEASTMASTER

Third season premieres in syndication the week of 9/30. Former *Earth: Final Conflict* story editor George Geiger has joined as the series' co-executive producer. Marc Singer now has a recurring role as the spirit warrior Dartanus.

BUFFY

Premieres with a two-hour episode 10/2 on UPN in its old WB slot (Tuesdays, 8 p.m.).

CHARMED

Airs Thursdays on the WB. Season premieres 9/27 with a two-hour episode introducing Rose McGowan as half-sister Paige. 10/11: "Size Matters." Robert Englund guest stars. This season's new episodes will air on TNT (Tuesdays, 10 p.m.) five days after they premiere on the WB (in a shared "dual window"), beginning 10/2.

THE CHRONICLE

Airs on SCI FI Saturdays. Renewed for nine more first season episodes, now in production. They'll begin airing in January.

DARK ANGEL

Season premieres 9/21 in its new Fox time slot (Fridays, 8 p.m.): "Designate This." 9/28: "Bag 'Em." See page 42 for an interview with Jessica Alba.

EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT

Renewed for a fifth (and final) syndicated season. Previous seasons air in rerun on SCI FI. New alien regular Alan Van Sprang spells his name that way. Premiering in syndication the week of 9/30: "Unearthed." Upcoming: "Pariahs," "The Seduction," "Subterra," "Termination." Former series lead Kevin Kilner guest stars in two shows airing in November ("Boone's Awakening," "Boone's Assassin").

Family Guy & his dysfunctional toon family are returning from their summer vacation time slot with a new catch—Thursday airdates.

ENTERPRISE

Premieres on UPN 9/26 (Wednesdays, 8 p.m.) with the two-hour episode "Broken Bow." 10/3: "Fight or Flight." 10/10: "Strange New World." 10/17: "Unexpected." Upcoming: "The Andorian Incident." See page 66 as Rick Berman previews the show.

FAMILY GUY

Season premiere on Fox 11/1 (Thursdays, 8 p.m.). Guest voices this season: Jennifer Love Hewitt, Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley.

THE INVISIBLE MAN

Airing in syndication *and* on SCI FI (Fridays, 8 p.m.). 10/5: "The Camp" (repeat).

KING OF THE HILL

Season premiere 11/4 on Fox. Guest voices this season: Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern, Alan Rickman.

LEXX

Third (and probably last) season now on SCI FI. Upcoming episodes: "A Midsummer's Nightmare," "The Bad Carrot," "769," "Prime Ridge," "Mort."

MUTANT X

Premieres in syndication the week of 9/30: "The Shock of the New," written by Howard Chaykin, directed by T.J. Scott. STARLOG visits the show's set on page 53.

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Second season premieres 9/11 on Pax (Tuesdays, 9 p.m.). Sarah Brown joins the regular cast.

ROSWELL

Third season premieres 10/9 on UPN for a full 22-episode third season, to air Tuesdays, 8 p.m. See page 76 as series creator Jason Katims previews the new season.

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF JULES VERNE

Premieres in local syndication the week of 9/16 (airing the first season shows previously seen on SCI FI).

RELIC HUNTER

Third season premieres in syndication the week of 9/16. Tanya Reichart joins the regular cast.

SABRINA

Airs Fridays, 8 p.m. on the WB. Season premiere 9/14. Caroline Rhea will exit at year's end to host a talk show.

SHEENA

Second season debuts in syndication the week of 10/6: "Rendezvous." 10/13: "The Feral King." 10/20: "Mind Games." 10/27: "Collateral Damage." 11/3: "Meltdown in Maltaka." 11/10: "Treasure of the Sienna Mende." See page 81 as series stewards Steve Sears & Doug Schwartz preview the second season.

THE SIMPSONS

Thirteenth season premieres on Fox 11/4. Guest voices this season: Pierce Brosnan, Jane Kaczmarek, Richard Gere, Dennis Weaver, Jon Lovitz.

SMALLVILLE

Airs Tuesdays, 9 p.m. on the WB. Premieres 10/16. See page 60.

SPECIAL UNIT 2

Airs Wednesdays, 9 p.m., UPN this fall. Season premiere 10/3. See page 71 for creator Evan Katz's preview of the second season.

STARGATE SG-1

Fifth season airs on Showtime (Fridays, 10 p.m.) and (fourth season shows) in syndication. A 22-episode sixth season begins shooting in January and debuts on SCI FI in June.

THE TICK

Premieres on Fox 11/1 (Thursdays, 8:30 p.m.).

TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL

Season premieres 9/22 in new fall time slot (Saturdays, 8 p.m.) on CBS.

THE X-FILES

Airs Sundays, Fox. Season premiere 11/4: "Nothing Important Happened Today," Part I, scripted by Chris Carter & Frank Spotnitz, directed by Kim Manners. 11/11: Part II, directed by Tony Whamby. Cary Elwes joins the cast in a recurring role as Assistant Director Brad Follmer, Agent Reyes' love interest.

Art: Copyright 2001 Fox Broadcasting Company

Note: Airdates can shift without notice. Series are only listed for which STARLOG has new info.

VIDEOG

DVD

By TOM WEAVER

WEIRD TALES

Image continues to pump out the schlock shockers with releases including *Doomwatch* with George Sanders; Ted V. Mikels gorefests like *Blood Orgy of the She Devils* and *The Corpse Grinders* (both with Mikels commentary); and, weirdest by far, *Monsters Crash the Pajama Party*, a 1965 spook show theatrical featurette complete with a werewolf, a gorilla in a fur coat, "Spooky Musical Soundies" and much more. *Monsters* is $19.99, the rest $24.99 each.

There's comedy—but also some chills—in schlock horror specialist William Castle's *13 Ghosts*, unveiled on DVD as the new Dark Castle Entertainment remake (co-produced by Castle's daughter Terry) is being geared for October theatrical release. The 1960 haunted house story was initially released in "Illusion-O," a process whereby theater audiences needed special glasses to see the spooks; this DVD comes with and *without* "Illusion-O," and provides a "Special Illusion-O Viewer" for the braver couch potatoes. Another bonus is the featurette "The Magic of Illusion-O." It's a haunting $19.95 from Columbia TriStar.

Cate Blanchett has *The Gift* of clairvoyance in the thriller—directed by Sam Raimi and co-written by Billy Bob Thornton—which (the press release points out with unaccountable pride) "earned $12 million at the box office." There are cast and crew interviews tossed in as extras on the $29.99 Paramount release. The more exploitative *Aenigma* (Image, $24.99), from Italian horror director Lucio Fulci, is a *Carrie*-like tale of a comatose girl who takes psychic revenge (unleashing killer snails, etc.) on her persecutors.

Last but not least, Image/Something Weird Video presents the two-disc set *The Veil: Special Edition* ($29.99), the complete run of the ultra-obscure 1958 TV series. Boris Karloff hosts (and acts in nearly every episode of) this *One Step Beyond*-like show, whose stories are reportedly based on real-life supernatural phenomena. Extras include a series history and episode guide (penned by yours truly), and two episodes of the equally rare Swedish-made suspense TV series *13 Demon Street*, written and directed by Curt Siodmak and hosted by Lon Chaney Jr.

SINGING THE BODY ECLECTIC

A new RoboCrop of man-made men (and one woman) is rolling off the assembly line, beginning with *Replicant*, a direct-to-video action thriller featuring a double dose of Jean-Claude Van Damme. The Muscles from Brussels plays a serial killer as well as a genetic clone that the government has made of him, in hopes that the replicant will help track down "the viscous killer." (Methinks the Artisan Entertainment publicists meant "vicious.") Help Artisan afford a proofreader by picking up the $24.98 DVD or the VHS. Then, maybe they can loan him to us.

Columbia TriStar pairs 1990's *Circuitry Man* with its 1994 sequel *Plughead Rewired: Circuitry Man II* on a single DVD, and tosses in audio commentaries by five veterans of the short-lived film series; it's just $24.95.

And, on the distaff side, Jennifer Beals is crafted out of spare (body) parts by Baron Frankenstein in director Franc Roddam's *The Bride* (1985), the pseudo-sequel-remake of James Whale's 1935 classic *Bride of Frankenstein*. Rock star Sting plays the scientist, who after assembling Beals proceeds to play Henry Higgins to his newly created Fair Lady. The movie is stolen, however, by Clancy Brown as a childlike Monster and the late David Rappaport as his dwarf sidekick, who embark on some *Of Mice and Men*-type adventures and take jobs in a circus. Director Roddam does the audio commentary honors on the $19.95 DVD.

GREENFINGER

DreamWorks intends their November 2 DVD launch of *Shrek* to become one of that format's biggest-ever releases, and have amassed 11 *hours* of bonus material (!!) to accompany the computer-animated 2001 box office smash. Among them are 15 minutes of new animation: three to be added to the movie itself and 12 created for the DVD's interactive menus. More details (including price) later.

Speaking of price, how's this for a bargain: MGM is reissuing the James Bond series on VHS, for what must be the double-o-seventh time, but now at a hard-to-resist $9.94 each—down from $19.98. The series (minus *The World Is Not Enough*) can also be had in three Gift Sets at $58.96, $41.96 and $49.96 respectively; each features a variety of Bond portrayers from different decades.

Take a spy guy like James Bond...put him together with some spy gals...and what might you get? Why, *Spy Kids*! In Robert Rodriguez's 2001 family comedy/action adventure, Antonio Banderas and Carla Gugino are retired superspies who have traded one life of adventure for another—parenthood. But when they fall victim to a kidnapping plot, only their kids (Daryl Sabara, Alexa Vega) can save them. It's $29.99 on DVD from Buena Vista. It's on VHS too, and this *isn't* the theatrical Special Edition.

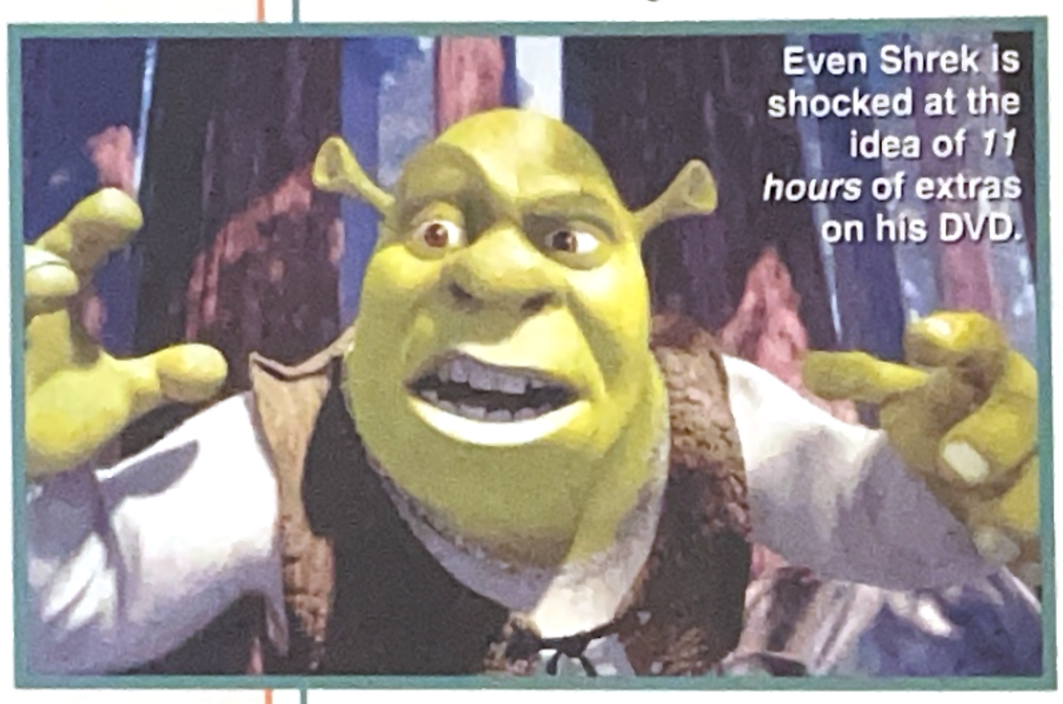

Image: Trademark & Copyright 2001 DreamWorks LLC

STAR TWEAKS

There are big doin's in the Final Frontier. First, if not foremost, eight more *Star Trek* episodes join the digital revolution: "The Empath" and "The Tholian Web" (paired on *Star Trek* #32), "For the World Is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky" and "Day of the Dove" (#33), "Plato's Stepchildren" and "Wink of an Eye" (#34) and "That Which Survives" and "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" (#35). They're $19.99 a pop from Paramount.

The top story, however, is the official announcement that 1979's *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* will become the first movie in the *Trek* franchise to get Special Edition DVD treatment. The sound mix has been tweaked and more than 90 shots digitally enhanced, improving the film's extremely rushed (at the time) special FX.

An attractive list of bonus features includes commentary by director Robert Wise, co-star Stephen Collins, FX wizards Douglas Trumbull and John Dykstra and composer Jerry Goldsmith; trims and outtakes; additional and deleted scenes; and three new retrospective docs. Once Paramount releases *ST:TMP—The Director's Edition* on November 6 (a $29.99 two-disc set), there's a tentative plan to release Special Edition DVDs of the balance of the *Trek* film series in chronological order.

This month, NASA's 2001 Mars Odyssey will touch down on the Red Planet, and to commemorate the event, Warners is releasing the IMAX films *Destiny in Space* (narrated by Leonard Nimoy), *Mission to Mir* and *Hail Columbia!* on VHS ($14.95) and DVD ($19.98). All three can be found in *The IMAX Space Collection* (which also tosses in the high-flying documentaries *Blue Planet* and *The Dream Is Alive*); it comes as a five-VHS box set ($75.92) and a five-disc DVD box set ($98.92).

VARIED FANTASIES

You'll find a killer rabbit and lotsa not-so-bright Knights as King Arthur (Graham Chapman) leads the quest in *Monty Python & the Holy Grail*. Columbia TriStar unveils a two-disc, widescreen $29.95 Special Edition DVD showcasing the Knights of the Round Table (who drink when they are able!). There are 90 minutes of *Grail* documentaries plus audio commentary by the *Holy* co-directors, the Python members known as the Two Terrys (i.e. Jones and Gilliam).

Fox has obtained video rights to George Lucas' *Willow* and will give the 1988 fantasy adventure its first DVD release. More details on this Special Edition as its November 27 street date nears. *Tomb Raider* is due out November 13. *Jurassic Park III* and Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes* are coming shortly, too.

Eddie Murphy is still talking (dirty?) to the animals—and they're still talking back—in *Dr. Dolittle 2* (Fox), the 2001 sequel to Murphy's 1998 hit. Dolittle is now an international celebrity, but he must take time off from his jet-set lifestyle to save forest critters endangered by unscrupulous loggers. Extras on the $26.98 DVD include director's commentary, storyboard comparisons, a featurette and an examination of the "movie magic" of Rhythm & Hues, the FX folks who gave the animals their human characteristics. It's also on VHS.

There are yet more animal (wise)crackers to be found in the same-priced Special Edition of *Cats & Dogs* (2001), the inventive family comedy in which the age-old war between our four-legged friends escalates into hi-tech battle technology. The truth about *Cats & Dogs* is revealed in separate dog and cat commentaries, just one of several bonus features that Warners has devised (storyboard comparisons, an HBO special on the film, etc.) to sweeten the kitty or, if you prefer, to put on the dog. Look for it on VHS, too.

Both of the aforementioned films rely heavily on CGI to achieve their effects; *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* is a start-to-finish product of cutting-edge computer wizardry. Derived from the popular video game series, directed by game creator Hironobu Sakaguchi and featuring an impressive "voice cast," *Final Fantasy* boasts eye-popping FX, great alien vs. human warfare and (alas) a deadly serious, semi-pretentious script. Columbia's $29.95 two-disc set is an ambitious collection of special features: commentaries by the film's co-director, editor and other key personnel, an isolated score with the composer's commentary, an interactive documentary, a music video, an alternate opening sequence and even a "*Final Fantasy* Shuffler" that allows *you* to become the filmmaker by re-editing a scene from the movie. Final fantasy indeed!

The *Final Fantasy* DVD features all sorts of surprises. You can even re-edit a scene, though you can't rewrite the script.

Image: Square Productions/Copyright 2001 Columbia Pictures

GOING APE

Fox's determination to squeeze every last drop of banana oil out of their *Planet of the Apes* franchise results in yet another boxed-set DVD release: The short-lived 1974 *Planet of the Apes* TV series with Ron Harper and James Naughton as fugitive humans on the monkey planet, and Roddy McDowall as the chimpanzee Galen, who aids and abets them. Rounding out the hirsute end of the regular cast are Mark Lenard (as militaristic gorilla Urko) and Booth Colman (the orangutan Dr. Zaius); one segment features the episodic TV debut of Naughton's brother David, playing a chimp several years before his even hairier star-making role in *An American Werewolf in London*. The 14 episodes come on four DVDs for $49.95. Can the Saturday morning DePatie-Freleng cartoon series *Return to the Planet of the Apes* be far behind?

More monkey business: *A*P*E* arrives on DVD, in widescreen, the day before Halloween—although April Fool's or Turkey Day would have been more appropriate. Joanna (*Growing Pains*) Kerns plays a Hollywood star who becomes the love object of a 36-foot ape on the rampage in Seoul, Korea. The flick was obviously made to cash in on the publicity surrounding the release of the Dino De Laurentiis *King Kong* (the disclaimer "Not to be confused with *King Kong*" ended up on the posters, no doubt for legal reasons); to capitalize on the *Jaws* craze, there's also a giant shark! *A*P*E*, originally in 3-D, debuts on DVD in 2-D (Image, $24.99), sorry to report.

Other far-out monsters on the home video horizon:

A mad scientist transforms himself into a mutant half-man, half-Portuguese man-o-war in 1967's *Sting of Death*, with special musical guest Neil Sedaka and screen newcomer Deanna (*Land of the Giants*) Lund. Director William Grefé furnishes audio commentary. It comes as half of a $24.99 Image DVD double-bill with Grefé's supernatural horror flick *Death Curse of Tartu* (1966), also with commentary.

A mad scientist transforms himself into a mutant half-man, half-catfish in the obscure 1971 Florida-made *Zaat*, available in a 500-copy limited edition autographed by producer-director Don Barton and writer Ron Kivett. It's $29.95 from DB & Associates (see www.zaat2000.com).

An eight-foot sheep spews orange gas and terrorizes the countryside in *Godmonster of Indian Flats* (1973), new to DVD in a Special Edition that also includes short subjects like *Rural Rat Control*, a 1964 horror nudie (*The Girl and the Geek*) and other bonus exploitation rarities/oddities. It's $24.99 from Image.

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BOOKLOG

***The Free Lunch* by Spider Robinson (Tor, hc, 256 pp, $22.95)**

This is the literary equivalent of Liquid Paper: an idea so agonizingly simple that it's a wonder no one has thought of it before. Of course, only someone like Robinson possesses the perspective to conceive it.

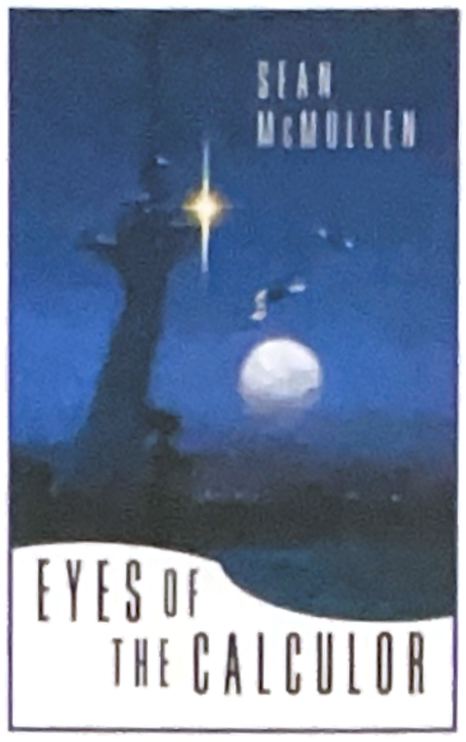
One day, a man named Mike decides to drop out of society. He infiltrates the sophisticated amusement park of Dreamworld and manages to assume the identity of one of the park's many robots. He's home free...or so he thinks. He soon learns that he isn't the first person to have thought of such a plan.

Lunch Art: Stephan Martiniere

As in any Robinson novel, there are many levels, and no clear warning as to what direction the plot will suddenly take. And, as always, it's overrun with sheer fun. In a book set in an amusement park, *The Free Lunch* turns out to be the wildest ride of all.

—Michael Wolff

***Eyes of the Calculor* by Sean McMullen (Tor, hc, 592 pp, $27.95)**



Calculor Art: John Harris

The few electrical devices remaining on Earth have been reduced to slag by the same source that granted them. That is Mirrorsun, an ancient space station encircling the planet, which has begun to absorb a world-threatening amount of energy. With all machines destroyed, the Dragon Librarians of Australica have begun to collect every numerate person they can to form components in the Calculor—an enormous, human-powered computer, the most sophisticated in a distant future where religions preach against fueled engines as heretical.

This is the latest in McMullen's *Greatwinter* saga, but it works excellently as an independent novel. Epic, densely plotted and filled with a spectrum of truly likable characters and well-placed touches of humor, *Eyes* navigates through racism, fanaticism and Machiavellian politics as its characters and their relationships evolve.

—Matthew Young

***Dreamer* by Steven Harper (Roc, pb, 368 pp, $5.99)**

The Dream is a mental plane where beings can communicate instantaneously regardless of physical distance. Only a few, through luck of genetics, can enter. They are known as the Silent, and a monastic order of them has noticed a burgeoning Silent on the impoverished planet Rust who is more powerful than any before, and could be rending the fabric of the Dream itself. They must find him before anyone else does, and help the young Silent harness his power.

Subtitled as *A Novel of the Silent Empire*, suggesting the opening of yet another series, the material *is* worthy of continued exploration. The main characters are interesting and well-rounded in a world that's complex and dynamic, and Harper pens a fast-paced gauntlet that leaves little unaffected by the last page.

—Matthew Young

***The Chronoliths* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, hc, 256 pp, $22.95)**

Mysterious stone pillars begin materializing on Earth. They bear carvings indicating that they came from 16 years in the future. The larger ones possess the power to obliterate the territory they appear in, killing thousands. Their appearance alters the shape of human society as the years slowly melt toward the time when the pillars were originally sent.

Scott Warden was present in Thailand when the first Chronolith appeared. He only wants to put his life back together, but finds himself faced again and again with the mystery. He soon realizes that he's meant to encounter the answer behind the Chronoliths—an answer which he suspects will involve him.

Wilson's style is reminiscent of the approach used by John Christopher. The same air of pessimism persists as an ordinary man finds his life twisted out of shape by fantastic events beyond his control. *The Chronoliths* is a time-travel story where, as now, time is still beyond our control. In this case, though, time has turned against us.

—Michael Wolff

***The Prince of Shadow: Volume One of Seven Brothers* by Curt Benjamin (DAW, hc, 464 pp, $23.95)**

There's not a shadow of a doubt that *The Prince of Shadow* is a thoroughly enjoyable read. Set in a land of wizards, dragons, laughing gods and mysterious goddesses, the book follows Llesho, the seventh prince of a deposed royal house, from his days as a pearl-diving slave to gladiator trainee, as he tries to win his freedom and find his long-lost brothers.

Prince Art: Luis Royo

Readers will fall in love with the charming, often confused Llesho; sympathize with him as he tries to find his family; and share his frustration at being manipulated by human and divine forces. Benjamin has written a winner of a story.

—Michael Wolff

***Revelation* by Carol Berg (Roc, pb, 496 pp, $6.99)**

Jimmy Stewart could play *Revelation*'s Seyonne. He's just a decent, honorable man trying to protect his family and do his job—though his wife is the queen of Ezzaria and his job is freeing souls from demonic possession. But when he lets one demon live, he's exiled from everything he loves. Now, he must discover the truth about the demons and Ezzarians before their long war destroys the world.

Berg has created a wonderfully compelling character in Seyonne. Even better, the book's plot is worthy of this empathetic exorcist and keeps the reader eagerly turning the pages. *Revelation* works exceedingly well as a stand-alone novel, but those who haven't read the prequel *Transformation* will want to do so after experiencing this marvelous effort.

—Penny Kenny

***God of the Golden Fleece* by Fred Saberhagen (Tor, hc, 384 pp, $24.95)**

Here Saberhagen continues the *Book of the Gods* with his rendition of the myth of the quest for the Golden Fleece. Jason and the Argonauts are sailing to Colchis to claim the Fleece when a mysterious man comes out of the sea to join their company. His name is Proteus, and his memory has been taken from him during a battle with a Giant. The Argonauts accept him and come to appreciate his contributions to the voyage, but Proteus is haunted by suspicious fragments of his past. He comes to feel he is a pawn in the game between the Gods and the Giants, but is unaware as to which side can honestly claim him. Unfortunately, his adventures bring him into constant contact with those who are less ignorant, and he is obliged to play one side against the other until he can determine the truth.

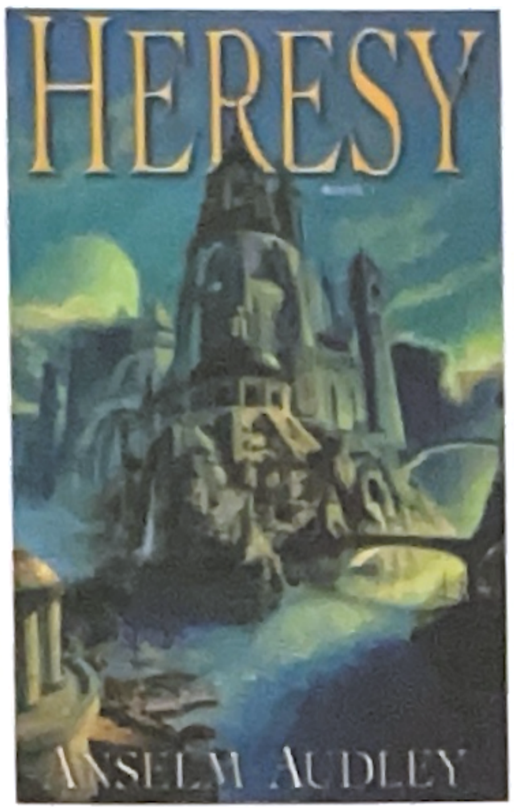
Fleece Art: Julie Bell

With this series, Saberhagen maintains his reputation as a fine genre writer, breathing new life into old stories and providing modern twists and interpretations. Even better, each installment stands on its own as a complete work.

—Michael Wolff

***Heresy: Book One of the Aquasilva Trilogy* by Anselm Audley (Pocket, hc, 416 pp, $25)**

When iron ore is discovered in Lepidor, young Cathan thinks only of the benefits it will bring to his impoverished country. He doesn't expect Lepidor to become the target of money-hungry merchant princes and fanatical religious extremists. And he doesn't expect to discover he's a potent mage who could tip the balance of power in Aquasilva.



While *Heresy*'s premise is sound, there are some rough spots. The various factions' politics are confusing, and Audley fails to make them mean anything to the reader. The characters also lack internal consistency—likable Cathan deserves better than this routine love story.

Hopefully by the next book, Audley will have fixed these flaws and made Aquasilva all it can be.

—Penny Kenny

Heresy Art: Jerry Vanderstelt

***Mother Ocean, Daughter Sea* by Diana Marcellas (Tor, hc, 416 pp, $27.95)**

Mother Ocean, Daughter Sea is a book that leaves the reader wondering about the world its characters inhabit—which is not to say the characters don't draw one in. They're complex and interesting peple, but it's the history of this world that's most intriguing.

Once, the powerful and technologically advanced Sh'ari witches roamed the land, until they were slaughtered by invaders. Now Brierly, perhaps the last Sh'ari, becomes a political pawn in a deadly game between earls and dukes for control of the country.

With this inventive novel, Marcellas has twisted traditional fantasy motifs in such a subtle and interesting fashion that one wonders, and anxiously awaits, where she's next going with this tale.

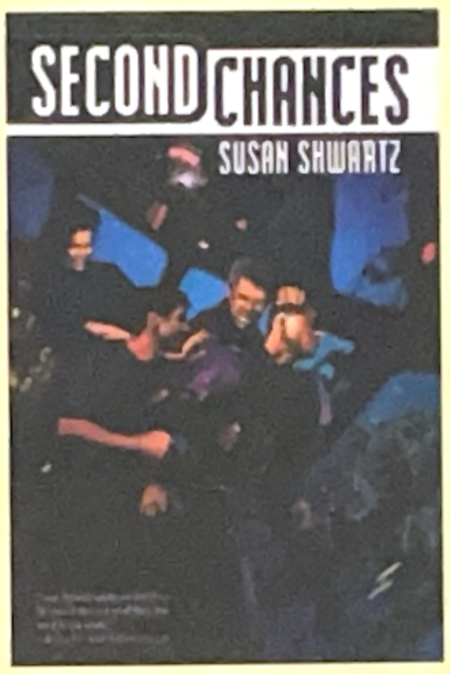
—Penny Kenny

Mother Art: Tristan Elwell

***Second Chances* by Susan Shwartz (Tor, hc, 384 pp, $14.95)**

Just over a century ago saw the release of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, a masterwork dealing with a man who struggles to regain honor and redemption following the crippling guilt of a single mistake.

Shwartz does not, by any means, claim Conrad's level of authorship, but she nonetheless manages to produce a refreshing translation of Conrad's basic premise using a SF milieu. Shwartz's Jim is a professional soldier in peacetime, essentially performing scutwork on a commercial starship. When disaster strikes, Jim takes the fall, and ends up bearing the entire burden of scandal as he carefully and optimistically works toward finding a possible solution and a means to regain his honor.



Interested readers might be better off pursuing Conrad's original treatment of this theme. Shwartz suffers from something of a love affair with kipple in her writing, but she does convincingly present a world where the corporate bottom line is more important than individual lives. When all is said and done, *Second Chances* is an honest tribute to both Conrad and to Shwartz's promise as a writer.

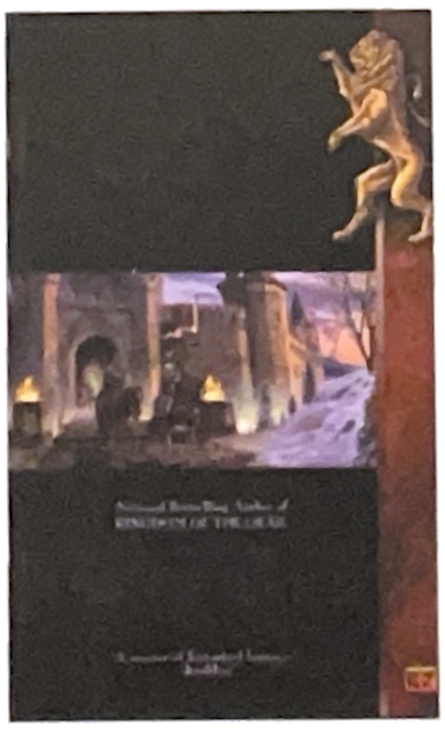
Second Art: David Seeley

—Michael Wolff

***Pride of Kings* by Judith Tarr (Roc, tpb, 464 pp, $14.95)**

Calling Judith Tarr a master of historical fantasy is old hat, but it's true nonetheless.

In *Pride of Kings*, she continues her chronicles of the Crusades. When the Lion-Heart refuses Britain's crown for glory in Jerusalem, the kingdom is left open to mystical attack. To protect the land, John must become king of the mortal and magical realms. Aiding him are Britain's most powerful mages and the young Arslan, who is almost more spirit than human. Together they must save the kingdom or lose it forever.



Pride of Kings is full of robust people both real and imagined, but Tarr's greatest gift is leaving her readers saying, "It seems like it could have been."

Pride Art: Jerry Vanderstelt

—Penny Kenny

FANLOG

This lists websites for SF, fantasy & animation creators and their creations. Website operators may add their sites to this list by sending relevant information via e-mail only to allan.dart@starloggroup.com

IAN HOLM WEB PAGE
Travel *From Hell* to *The Sweet Hereafter* in this Holm page dedicated to the legend of Baggins Vance.
home.pix.za/cm/cm47

HARRY POTTER SCHOLASTIC SITE
Before you see the movie, read the books. Meet J.K. Rowling and discover her series of enchanting escapades involving everybody's favorite mini-Merlin at
www.scholastic.com/harrypotter/home.asp

OFFICIAL JET LI WEBSITE
Whether you're a Hong Kong film buff or just a *Lethal Weapon 4* fan, this *Romeo* is *The One* to die for. The martial arts master kicks ass at
www.jetli.com

SAMURAI JACK OFFICIAL SITE
It's Samurai in the City at the Cartoon Network. Learn the way of the warrior at
www.cartoonnetwork.com/jack

ANDROMEDA OFFICIAL SITE
Join the High Guard of the Commonwealth and fight for freedom with Kevin Sorbo and crew.
www.andromedatv.com

SPECIAL UNIT 2 SITE
It's a monster mash of episode info, cast & crew bios and more. Catch a missing Link at
www.tvtome.com/servlets/ShowMainServlet/showid-2158

OFFICIAL SLIDERS WEBSITE
Take a portal to a parallel universe and slide into new dimensions with the brothers O'Connell.
www.scifi.com/sliders

OFFICIAL DAVE PROWSE PAGE
The *Empire Strikes Back* as the man behind Darth Vader instructs you in the dark ways of the Force. Rule the galaxy at
www.daveprowse.com

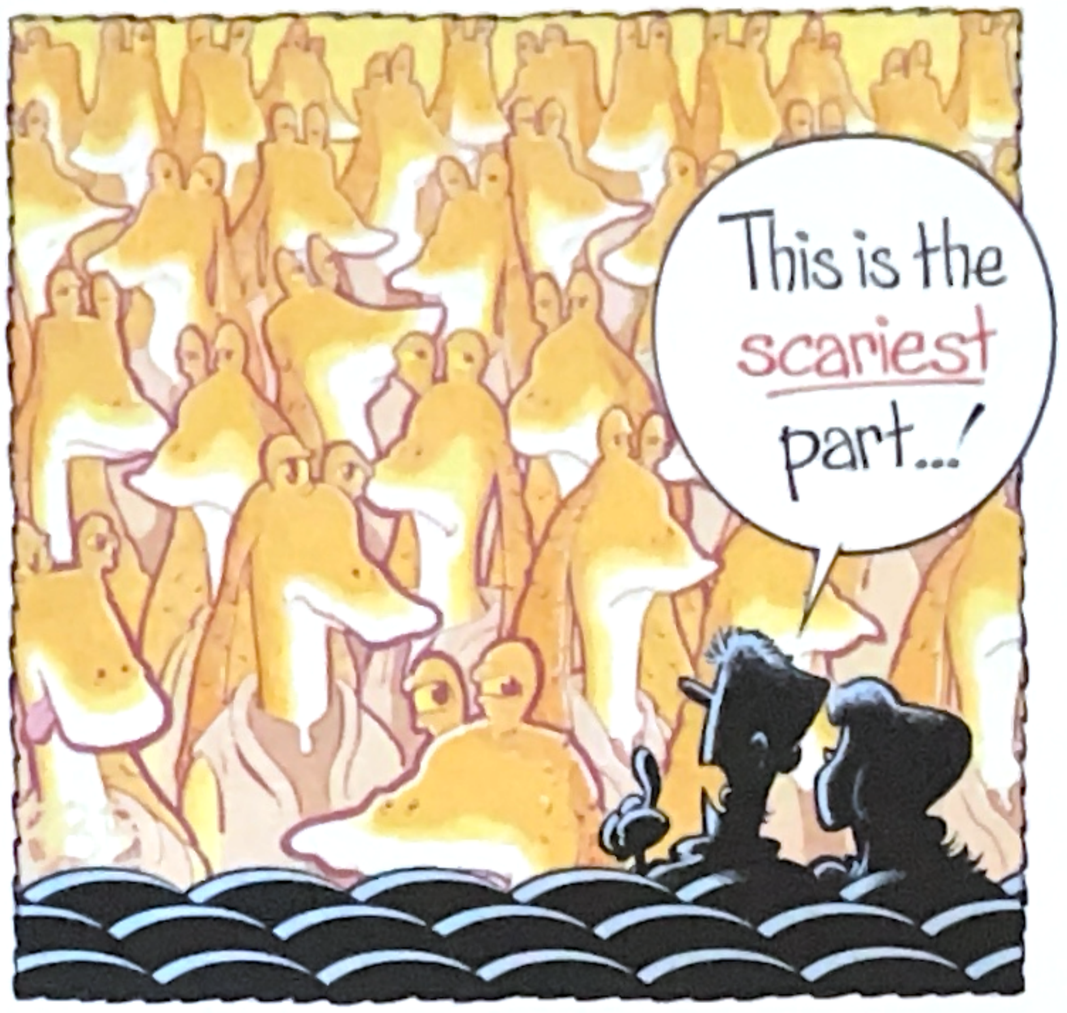
VICTOR LUNDIN PAGE
He played Friday on Mars and was a Klingon on *Star Trek*. Catch up on this SF star's career at
www.victorlundin.com

NIGEL BENNETT SITE
Lexx's punishing Prince rules Fire as he remains forever bad at
www.blackhatstation.com/index2.htm

DAVID BRIN'S WEB PAGE
Browse David Brin's book bin for a study of this storyteller's tomes. *Foundation's Triumph* is celebrated at
www.kithrup.com/brin/main.htm

JONATHAN CARROLL SITE
Ride *The Wooden Sea* to this website, where the worlds of fantasy and reality are awash in a Carroll reef of imaginative fiction.
www.jonathancarroll.com

OFFICIAL CARRIE DOBRO WEB PAGE
Check out this hypernaut's latest SF *Crusade*. Heed the *Call to Arms* at
www.carriedobro.com



ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Art: "Big Bad Bubba"

CONVENTIONS

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Creation
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WestTennCon, Inc
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Guests: Robin Curtis, Peter Jurasik, Peter David

CREATION
October 20-21
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Phoenix, AZ
Creation
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Vulkon
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Creation
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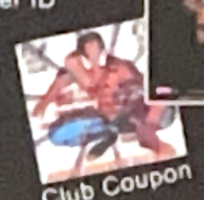

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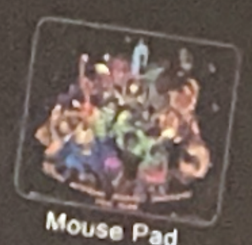

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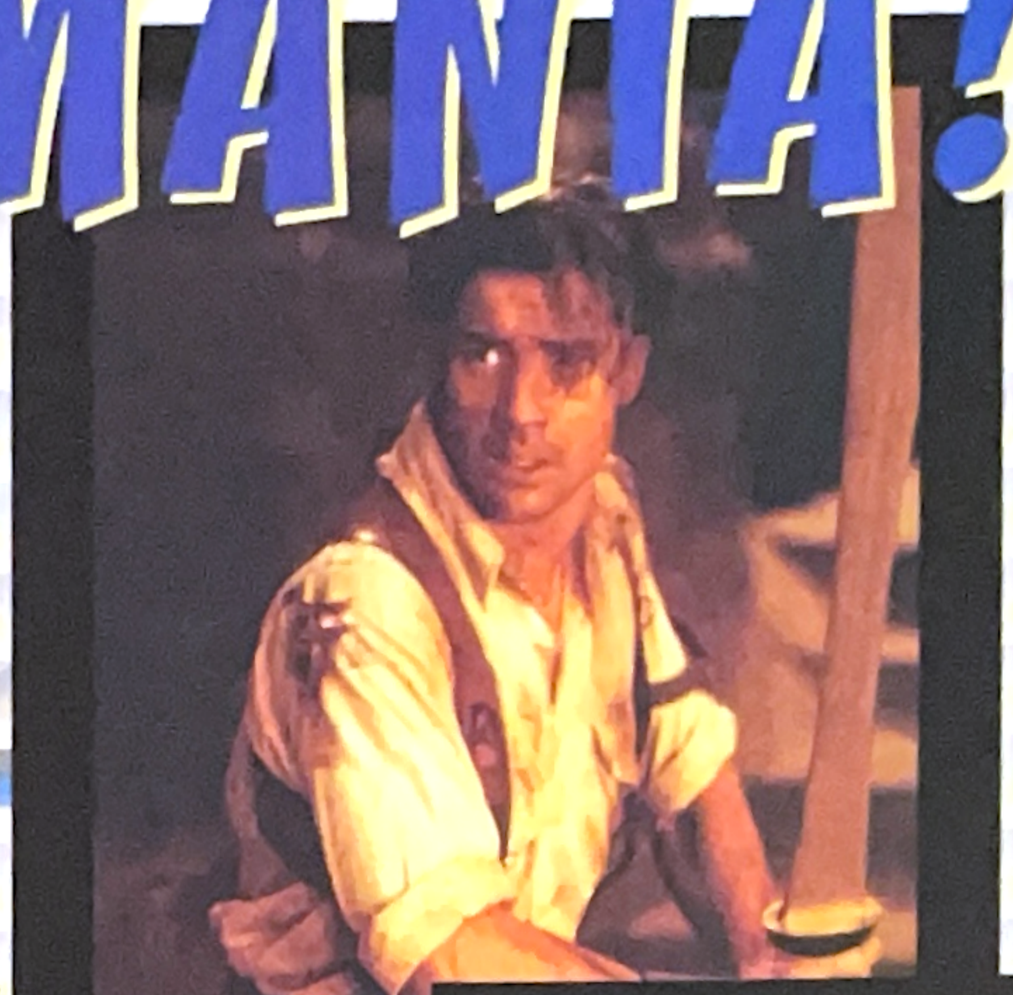

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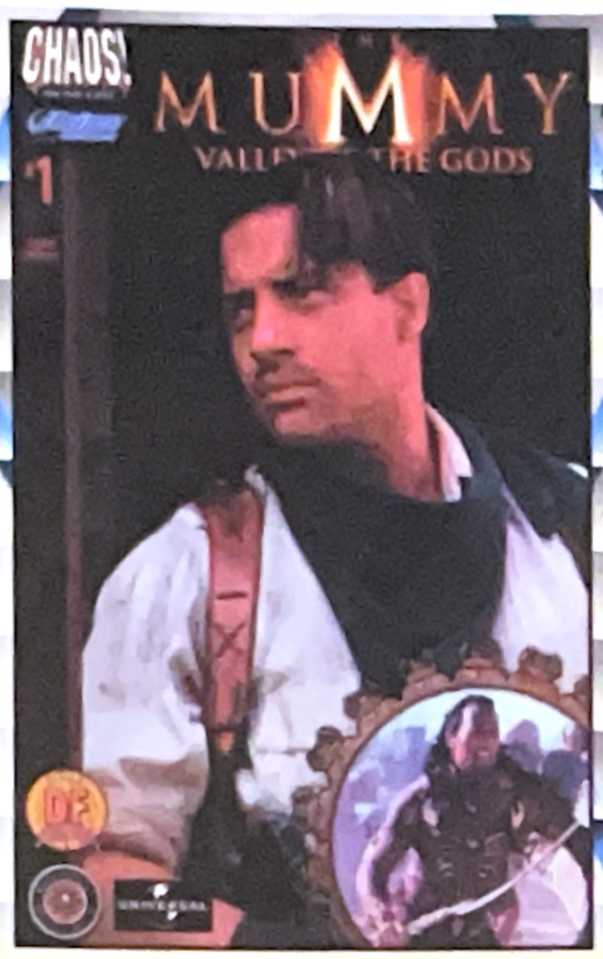

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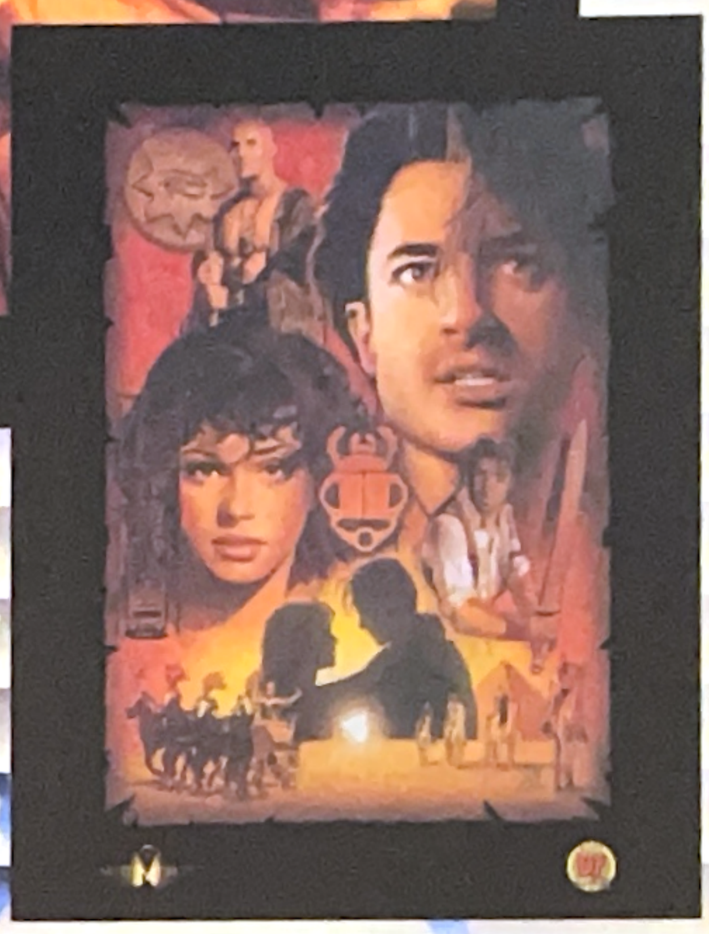

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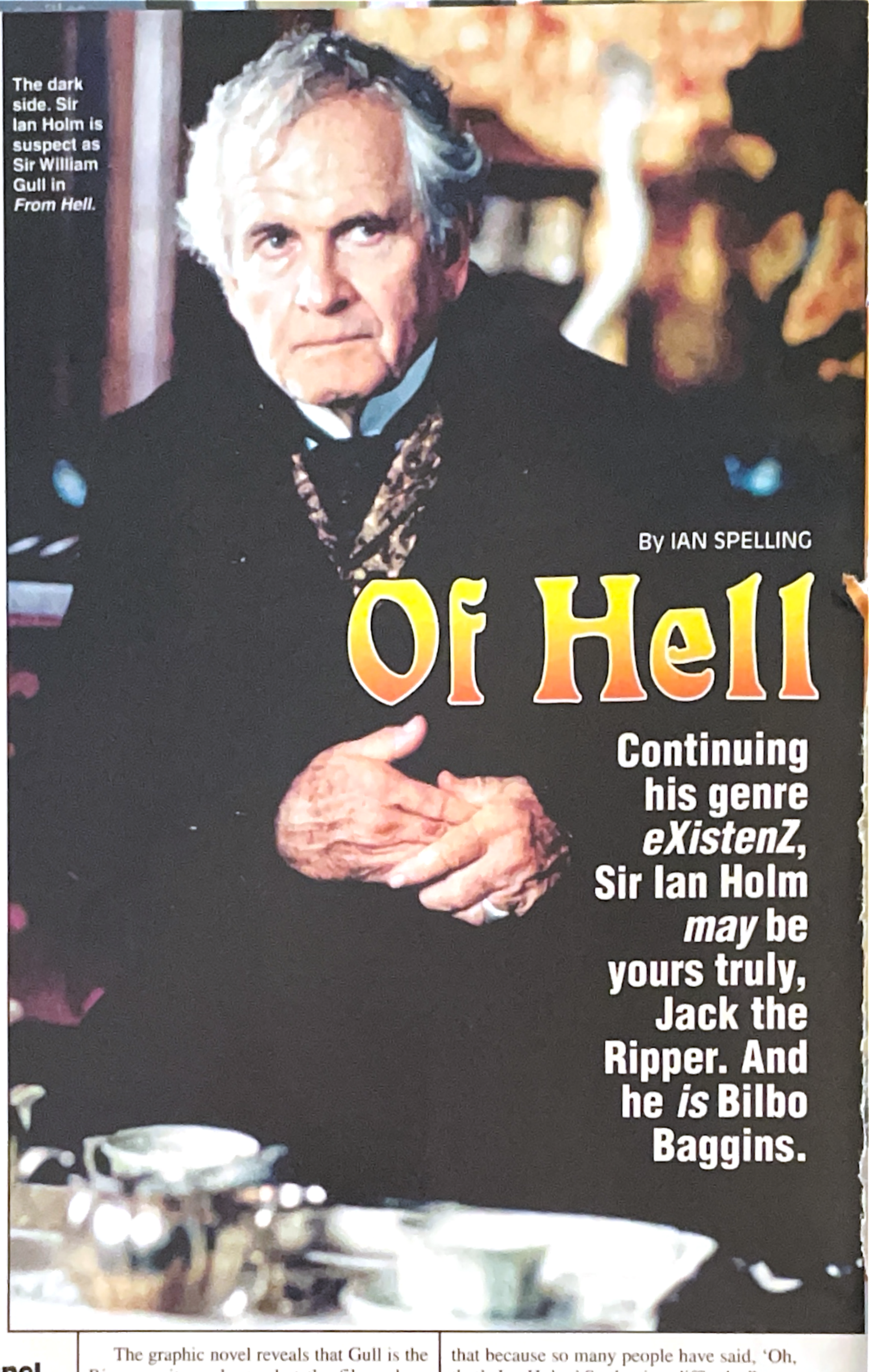


The dark side. Sir Ian Holm is suspect as Sir William Gull in *From Hell*.

By IAN SPELLING

Of Hell

Continuing his genre *eXistenZ*, Sir Ian Holm *may* be yours truly, Jack the Ripper. And he *is* Bilbo Baggins.

Sir Ian Holm must *really* love SF and fantasy. Take a look at the man's credits: *ALIEN*, *Time Bandits*, *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*, *Dream-Child*, *Brazil*, *Naked Lunch*, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Loch Ness*, *The Fifth Element*, British TV's *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *eXistenZ*, *Bless the Child*, *From Hell* and the first and third of the *Lord of the Rings* features, *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Return of the King*. "It would seem that way, but it *hasn't* been intentional," Holm insists. "It's literally what has come through the mailbox. Having said that, I *do* enjoy these movies."

From Hell (due out this month) and *The Fellowship of the Ring* represent Holm's most recent genre ventures. Directed by Albert and Allen Hughes, the twin brothers behind *Menace II Society* and *Dead Presidents*, and based on the acclaimed graphic novel by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *From Hell* depicts the frantic quest in 1888 to catch London's murderous Jack the Ripper. Johnny (*Sleepy Hollow*) Depp plays Inspector Frederick Abberline of Scotland Yard, with Heather (*Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*) Graham as the endangered harlot Mary Kelly. Holm is Sir William Gull, a distinguished surgeon and confidant of royalty whom some of today's "Ripperologists" believe was Jack the Ripper.

"There are so many stories written about these characters," Holm notes. "I mean, *who* was Jack the Ripper? Gull was a real person who was trying to hide the Prince's misdemeanors from the royal family, and it seemed to me very justifiable and possible that he *could* be involved. The movie was directed by these two extraordinary guys, Albert and Allen. They're out on a limb. I didn't spend a great deal of time with Johnny and Heather. I was murdering models most of the time."

Far from Whitechapel

Holm assumed the role of Gull after his good friend and *The Madness of King George* co-star Nigel Hawthorne fell ill and withdrew from the project. "I was very sad about that," says Holm, who stepped in at the last minute. "I had never done that before. It's hard, but you try to put your own stamp on it. It becomes a spur to do that, rather than to fit what Nigel would have done with it, because I am who I am and I'm *not* Nigel Hawthorne. It was a sad thing to do, but I hope I acquitted myself."

The graphic novel reveals that Gull is the Ripper quite early on, but the filmmakers have chosen to delay such disclosures and make his identity more murky and mysterious—an alteration that impacted on Holm. "It did," he sighs. "Because an awful lot of my stuff is voiceover, they are spending a great deal of time trying to disguise my voice to the point where one says, 'Hey guys, you know, why don't you just revoice it or cast somebody else? I am who I am and you cast *me*.' So it's going to be very difficult unless I put on a funny voice, which I don't do. But I know they're in the process of trying to do that because so many people have said, 'Oh, that's Ian Holm.' So that is a difficulty."

While the book brims with revealing detail—readers glimpse Gull as a youngster, toiling as a surgeon, conferring with Queen Victoria, behaving fanatically and befriending the Elephant Man—the film adaptation can't cover as much ground. Holm, therefore, played the character as "an enigma." After illustrating *From Hell*, Campbell announced his belief that Gull was *not* Jack the Ripper. Holm, after portraying the man, declines to make such a definitive statement.

"The story is about *who* the Ripper was,"

observes the actor, pointing to the many other suspect candidates that Ripperologists have nominated for the dishonor. "They're all feasible. Gull was in prison for another crime, but as to whether he was actually Jack the Ripper, I wouldn't be able to say. It just seemed like a good idea to make a movie out of it. And I'm told the movie is a 'Wow.' "

Even bigger things are expected, to be sure, from the *Lord of the Rings* films based on the tripartite masterwork of J.R.R. Tolkien (the first, *Fellowship of the Ring*, opens December 19). Peter Jackson, the trilogy's director, invited Holm to play Bilbo Baggins, the somewhat offbeat and furry-footed Hobbit, in a cast that includes Elijah Wood as the heroic Frodo, Sir Ian McKellen as the wizard Gandalf and Liv Tyler as the Elf Arwen (see page 22).

Holm consented for several reasons. "It's a good part," he says. "He's the ring carrier and has to take it to his nephew Frodo and see that it is given to Mordor and destroyed. Most of my stuff was with Sir Ian McKellen, whom I had met before but never worked with. I thought it would be an interesting experience, and it turned out to be more so. I just found him so generous, and we became good friends. I had also never been to New Zealand before. I was completely amazed. Having said that, I only worked for five or six weeks and spent most of my time in the studio. I felt, 'Well, I haven't come all this way on a 23-hour flight to just see the inside of a studio.' So I stayed on for a week to 10 days and went to the South Island and so on, and was duly rewarded. New Zealand is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen in my life, anywhere—and I've traveled."

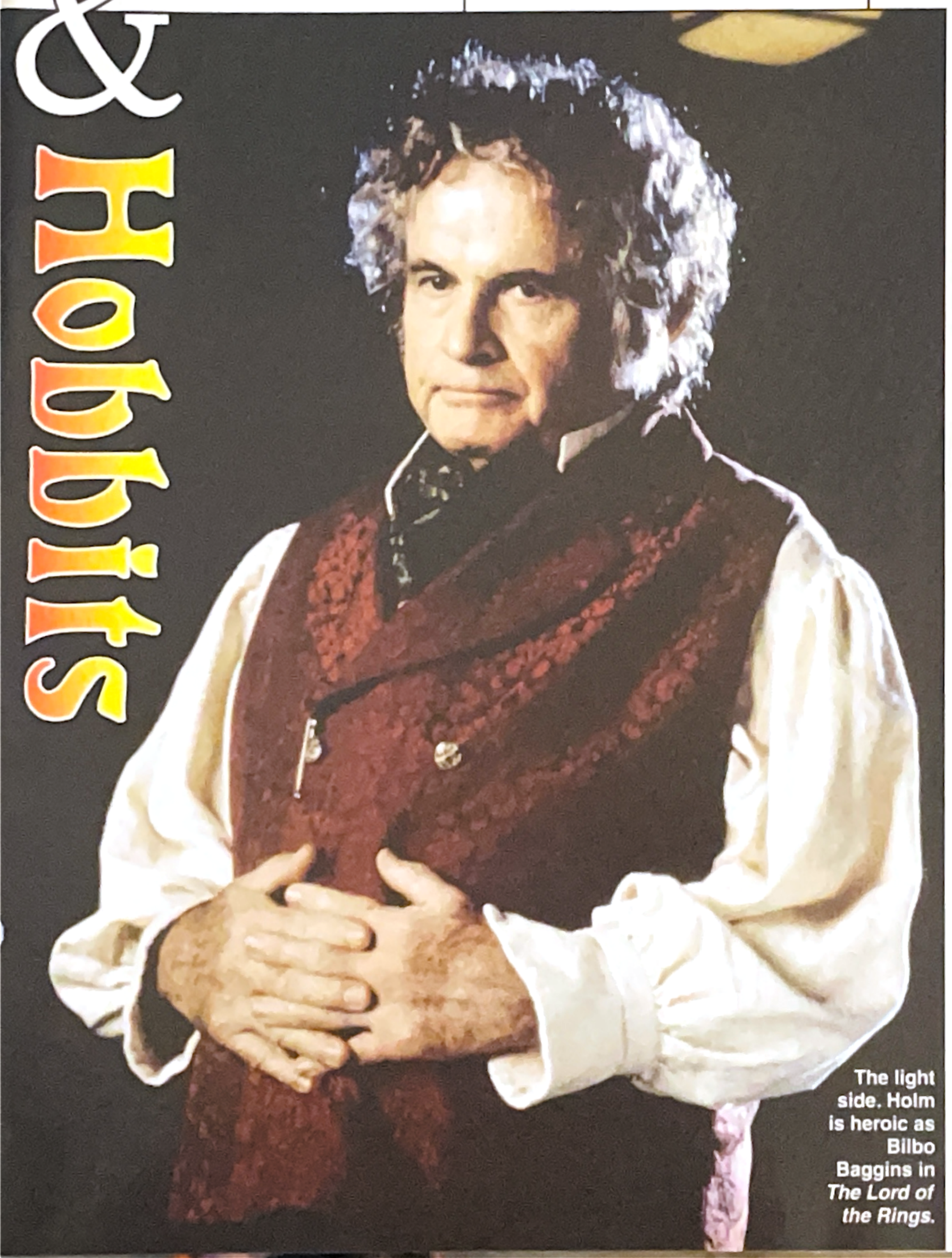
Though he may be one of the Hobbits, Bilbo—in terms of action and screen time—takes a back seat to Frodo and his devoted friends Pippin (Billy Boyd), Merry (Dominic Monaghan) and Sam (Sean Astin). Except for a couple of flashback sequences lensed months after the initial production wrapped, Bilbo's history—his own dangerous and heroic adventures outside the Shire—were left for readers to discover in the pages of *The Hobbit*. Likewise, Holm's limited number of days on the *Rings* set prevented him from forming strong bonds with his younger co-stars.

"I felt a little bit out of it from that point-of-view, because if you're only there for five weeks, you don't have the opportunity to form a long relationship with your fellow actors," he relates. "They were there for more than a year and they bonded. I think they all got tattoos. They got on tremendously well, and I don't see why they wouldn't, because they're all very nice people. I missed that, as an actor, because I'm so used to working in an ensemble. I hate the star system. I cannot, in all honesty, say I was an integral part of the group that journeyed every day for that length of time. It must have been an extraordinary experience for them, and they're babies, too."

Through Middle-Earth

Holm (previously profiled in STARLOG #99) is no stranger to the *Lord of the Rings* Universe. After all, he did play Frodo in a 1970s BBC radio production of the trilogy. And that was apparently enough preparation to play Bilbo. "I don't tend to do research on anything, anyway," he explains. "I do the script in hand. On this, I did know the stories. But actors can read themselves out of a part. You really have to confront the script at hand. I also had Christopher Lee on board [as Saruman]. He either knew or had met Tolkien, and he's an absolute devotee. He re-reads the books every year. I don't go that far, but I go along with the fact that *Lord of the Rings* is a wonderful story. It's a classic tale of good and evil. It wasn't voted the best book of the 20th century in my country for nothing. They're incredible stories.

"Peter Jackson is a remarkable human being," Holm attests, praising Tolkien's filmic translator. "I'm sure he wouldn't mind me describing him as ordinary. He *is* ordinary. He has one pair of sneakers, one pair of socks and a couple of shirts, and he bicycles around between sets. Jackson is very lovable. He's firm, but he certainly isn't dictatorial. He gets his performance by cajoling and suggesting rather than going on madly. I like him enormously. He's also passionate about film, which helps. Where he got the energy from to do three films back-to-back-to-back like this I will never know, but his achievement is extraordinary. When we saw the 20 minutes [of footage that Jackson and New Line Cinema assembled to tantalize the world's press



The light side. Holm is heroic as Bilbo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings*.

All Rings Photos: Pierre Vinet/Copyright 2001 New Line Cinema

in May], Christopher said, 'Well, that is Tolkien.' You can't really get higher praise than that."

Realizing the Tolkien milieu on screen boiled down to fanciful costumes, elaborate makeup, state-of-the-art CGI and the use of old-fashioned forced perspective. Holm relished watching Jackson and his team employ the assorted tricks of the trade. To appear as the aged Bilbo at the end of *The Return of the King*, Holm spent several hours in a makeup chair as prosthetics were applied to every inch of his face, except his eyes.

In order for the diminutive Bilbo to interact convincingly with the far taller Gandalf, Holm alternately shot on sets big and small, while a stand-in shorter than Holm sometimes worked with McKellen, and a stand-in taller than McKellen sometimes worked with Holm. Later, the footage was seamlessly grafted together. In the film, look for one deceptively nondescript scene in which Bilbo and Gandalf pass a hat between them: Holm and McKellen weren't in the same shot at the same time, and there was no hat.

Holm has dealt with FX before and, in fact, he had even gone small previously, when he played Pod in the 1993 British TV productions of Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* and *The Return of the Borrowers*.

"There were different types of tricks," Holm recalls of the methods used to create the miniature Borrowers. "Mary always said everything must be from the Borrowers' perspective. Having said that, the sets were extraordinary for both productions, even though one was television and one was movies. One of the things I like about *Lord of the Rings* is that it's not another special effects movie, but the effects *are* extraordinary. The technology wasn't around seven years ago; otherwise I'm sure somebody would have made *The Lord of the Rings* before now—although I know they've done it in animation. Peter asked me, 'What do you think [of the 20 minutes]?' and I said I was completely bowled over by it. He said, 'Oh, that's just bubble gum. Wait until you see the real stuff.' That brings out my point: The characters and the storyline are more important than the special effects. One helps the other and blends with the other, which is good."

All From Hell Photos: Jurgen Vollmer/Copyright 2001 20th Century Fox

Unlike graphic novel illustrator Eddie Campbell, Holm is uncertain if Gull was the *real* Jack the Ripper.

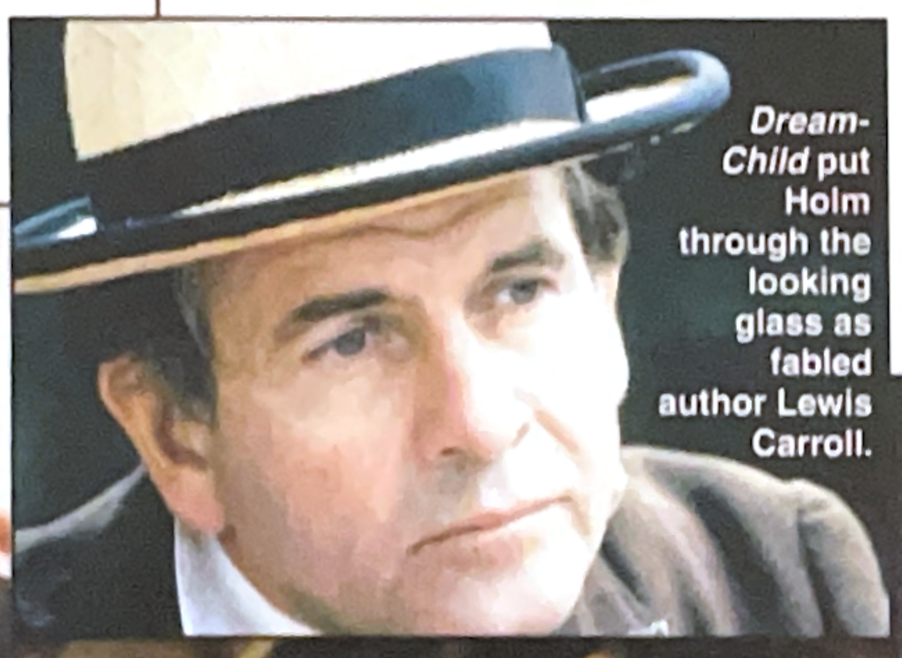
Beyond the Stars

Good is an apt adjective to describe some of Holm's other genre excursions. Of course, classic, disappointing and even disastrous come to mind as well.

ALIEN, to state the obvious, falls into the classic category. "*ALIEN* was hell to make," admits Holm, who played the two-faced android and science officer, Ash. "It was quite uncomfortable: 16 weeks down at Shepperton, all the bodily fluids and so on. Ridley Scott was quite tough. I'm sure, like all of us, he has mellowed since then. It's like *Chariots of Fire*—I don't think any of us had any idea it would be the success that it was."

DreamChild cast Holm as Reverend Charles L. Dodgson, better known as the legendary author Lewis Carroll. The film starred Coral Browne as the now-elderly girl for whom Carroll wrote his *Alice in Wonderland* adventures. "I'm very proud of *DreamChild*," Holm smiles. "It's a delicate, beautifully directed film by Gavin Millar. I can remember dear, departed Coral desperately trying to resurrect that [in the U.S.]. It kind of became a sleeper, but nobody really saw it. It's just a beautifully crafted movie."

DreamChild Photo: Copyright 1984 Thorn/EMI Screen Entertainment



Dream-Child put Holm through the looking glass as fabled author Lewis Carroll.

ALIEN was a hellish experience. "It was quite uncomfortable," Holm recalls.

"He's just a nutcase," Holm says of *The Fifth Element*'s director, Luc Besson.

Photo: Jack English/Copyright 1996 Sony Entertainment

Photo: David Appleby/Copyright 1994 TriStar Pictures, Inc.

ALIEN Photo: Bob Penn/Copyright 1979 20th Century Fox

Bilbo's *small* role unfortunately left Holm with little time to bond with the *Rings* cast.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein found the actor co-starring as Baron Frankenstein opposite Kenneth Branagh as Victor Frankenstein and Robert De Niro as the Creature. Branagh, who also directed the film, called on Holm after collaborating with him a few years earlier in his big-screen version of *Henry V*. "*Frankenstein* was a very happy time, but it wasn't a happy film," Holm assesses. "It bombed. I enjoyed working with Ken. He's a very, very inspiring director and has energy and drive, but in a completely different way than Peter Jackson. People just love Ken and adore working with him."

Mention of Luc Besson's would-be SF epic *The Fifth Element* really gets Holm talking. He played priest Vito Cornelius, and shared the screen with Bruce Willis and Milla Jovovich. "It was very interesting to work with a—and I use the word politely—megalomaniac," Holm laughs. "Besson is a god in his country [France]. He makes remarkable visual pictures. He's just a nutcase. It was also interesting for me to work with someone like Bruce, whom I have much regard for. I could see that he wanted to work with a European director. There was a language problem, no question about that. Besson wanted Bruce to strut his stuff and Bruce would say, 'If you want jokes, I did all that on *Moonlighting*. But, hey, if that's what you want, get me out of here by May 13.' And he did an extremely professional job.

"There was a whole aura of secrecy about that movie. You see the end result and you think, 'What the hell was all the secrecy about? It's just a sci-fi movie.' But it was fun. It was interesting to watch Besson. He's like Ridley in that he does everything himself. I marvel at somebody who has that amount of control and vision. It's amazing. We got on very well, but he doesn't tolerate fools, let's put it that way. I saw the film late [in its theatrical run] a theater with about 10 other people. I liked it."

Then there's *eXistenZ*, David Cronenberg's oddity about a VR game creator (Jennifer Jason Leigh) whose latest invention requires the player to plug a jack into their back. Holm co-starred as the shadowy Kiri Vinokur. "I loved doing *eXistenZ*," enthuses Holm, who previously acted for Cronenberg in *Naked Lunch*. "Unfortunately, most of me was cut out of the movie. I love working with Cronenberg. He's another one for whom the word dictatorial doesn't leap to mind. He's the most lovable man. This guy races cars. He's a gentle man, and he makes these crazy films."

Now, with *Lord of the Rings*, Holm—who's also starring as Napoleon in *The Emperor's New Clothes*—believes he's part of something special, perhaps another classic. "I feel that I am," Ian Holm avers. "I feel, with Christopher Lee, and not to put too fine a point on it, that this will be a landmark in cinema history. That's my belief and, of course, I'm proud to be associated with it."

eXistenZ Photo: Ava V. Gentz/Copyright 1999 Miramax Films

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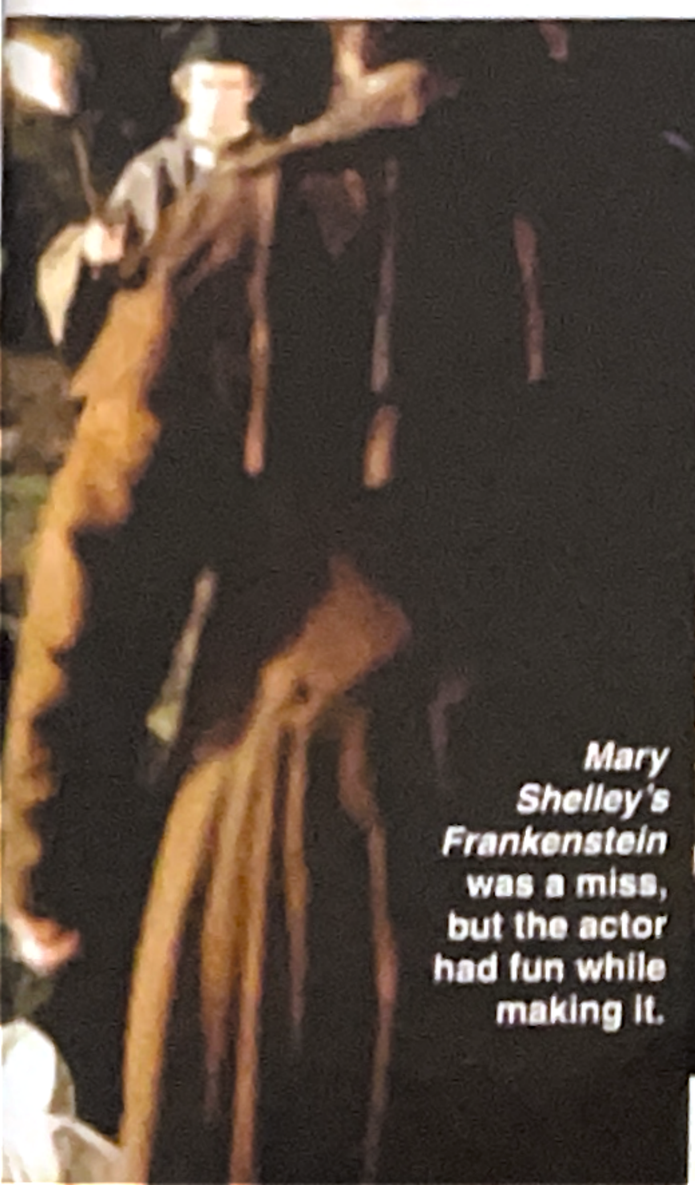

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein was a miss, but the actor had fun while making it.

Although Holm loved doing *eXistenZ*, most of his role was cut from the film.

Naked Lunch was the actor's first collaboration with David Cronenberg.

Holm tried to save—not slay—Kim Basinger in *Bless the Child*.

Photo: Brian Hamill/Copyright 1991 Recorded Picture Company Ltd. & Naked Lunch Productions Ltd.

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Liv Tyler holds court in the eagerly awaited J.R.R.

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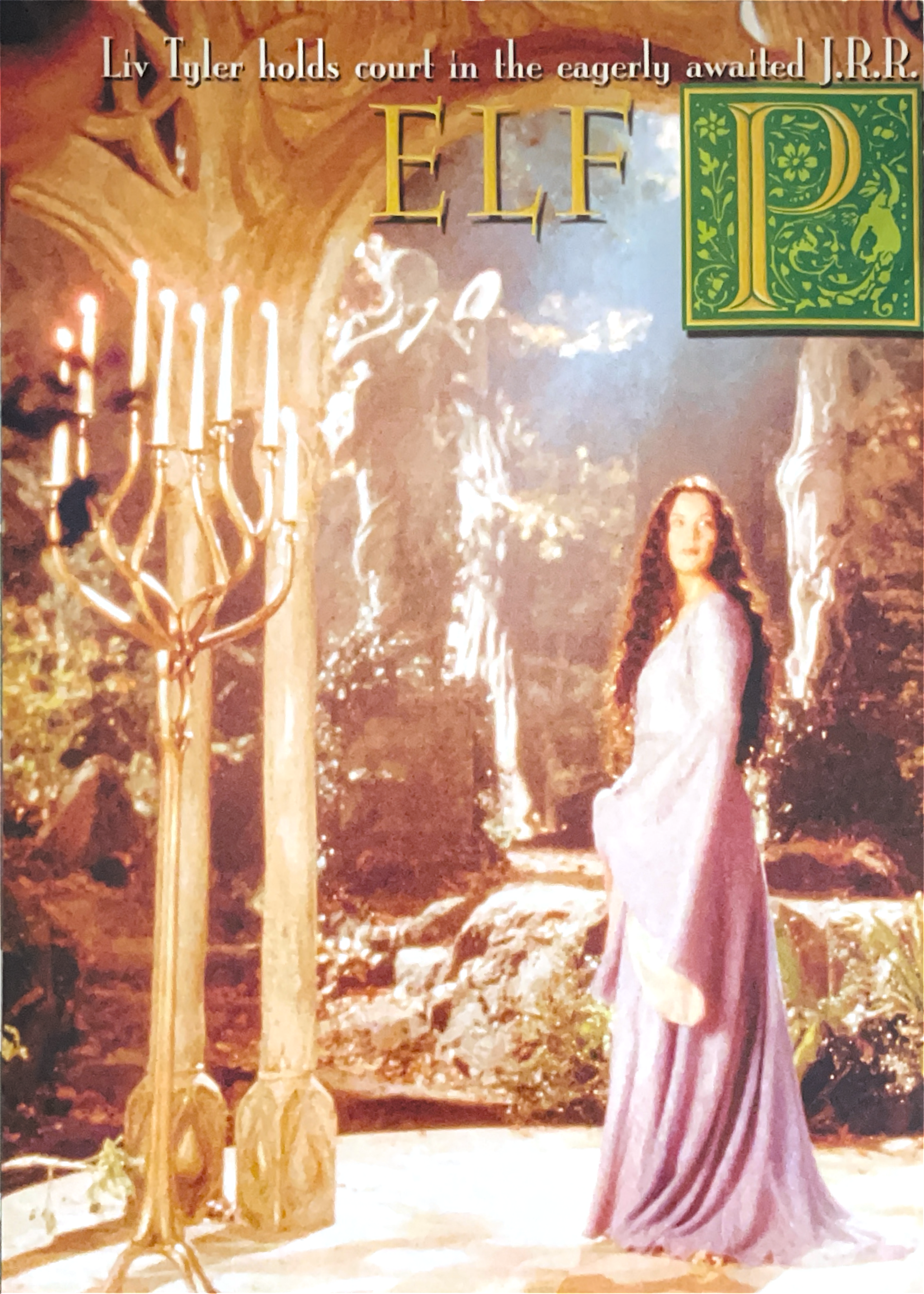

Tolkien film trilogy. RINCESS

By IAN SPELLING

Liv Tyler was gobsmacked.

The night before this conversation, the actress sat in a screening room in Cannes, France, and for the first time glimpsed finished footage from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which will kick off December 19 with the release of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Her director, Peter Jackson, had assembled 25 minutes of film that included snippets from the saga's introduction, an extended *Fellowship* battle sequence with the Hobbits (Elijah Wood, Sean Astin, Billy Boyd and Dominic Monaghan), Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen), the Elf Legolas (Orlando Bloom), the Dwarf Gimli (John Rhys-Davies) and Gandalf (Sir Ian McKellen), scenes of Tyler in action as the Elf princess Arwen Evenstar and teaser images of the subsequent *Rings* adventures: *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*, due for release in 2002 and 2003, respectively.

"It was pretty shocking and amazing," Tyler delights. "We had already seen footage of us acting and the other characters, but to see it with some of the enhancements was unbelievably fascinating and also scary. I was actually scared. I kept screaming out and going, 'Oh, my God!' I was really reacting to it. It was spectacular. What we saw last night wasn't even completely finished and it's *incredibly* impressive. The cave troll has feeling and emotion, and when it stabs Elijah [as Frodo], it makes an expression for a second—like it feels a little bit sad or isn't sure of its conscience. That's what I felt, and what a difficult thing to do with a computer!"

One scene not shown, however, was Tyler's big special FX scene. "For the whole sequence," she says, "I'm supposed to be talking and reacting to a Ring Wraith, but I was really talking to a neon pink golf ball on a dolly, with two cameras on me and Peter saying what was going to be happening. I just had to make it all up, react to it and try to make it real."

Elf Love

Although Arwen Evenstar of Rivendell is a memorable character in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Rings* trilogy, she figures far less prominently than most of the saga's other familiar names. In fact, most of Arwen's journey unfolds not in the main text of the books, but in the appendix, which includes a large chapter devoted to Arwen, the mortal Aragorn and their love.

"There were many rumors surrounding Arwen and *who* she was going to be," Tyler says of the character's role in the films. "We toyed with many different ideas. I think it was important to Peter, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens when they were writing the scripts that there be a feminine presence in the stories. There are only three other female characters in them, so it took some work to figure it out."

Hard work was required of all involved in the *Rings* trilogy. For most of the cast, saying "yes" meant spending up to 15 months in New Zealand, far away from friends and family and the Hollywood scene. It meant putting tremendous faith in Jackson and playing the same character for an unusually long time. It meant, in some cases, risking typecasting.

"There was a certain amount of blind leaping involved with *Lord of the Rings*," acknowledges Tyler. "Obviously, we were very clear about some things from reading the books and the scripts. In terms of Arwen, I loved the whole story between her and Aragorn. It's so beautiful and timeless, like *Romeo and Juliet*. There's a hopeless romantic side to the struggles that Arwen and Aragorn go through to be together. The challenges and the decisions they face I found really touching.

When J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* comes to celluloid life, Liv Tyler illuminates the screen as Arwen Evenstar.

All Rings Photos: Pierre Vinet/Copyright 2001 New Line Cinema

While filming her scenes, Tyler felt that she could never forget she was playing an Elf.

"Also, to play an Elf was amazing," she notes. "They're the most magical of all the Tolkien characters. They're like Buddhas, perfectly centered all the time. They don't move around too much. They're very graceful. They can communicate without words. They have very keen senses of smell, hearing and sight. It was very challenging to play. We Elves couldn't forget, even for a second, who we were and what we were playing. That was quite different from the type of acting I've done in the past, where the scenes were very natural and you could forget completely where you were and get lost in the dialogue. This was much more technical. I had to speak Elven, and it had to appear natural and feel relaxed. For me, it was something very different.

"We also all did plenty of training. It was sort of required when we came on, no matter what your part was. Everybody had to begin some kind of a physical routine, mainly to prepare us for the stamina we would have to have to shoot everything. It went on for the whole film, but particularly in the beginning—there were about two months where we did horseback riding, sword fighting, working out with trainers, archery, dialect, movement classes. There was everything you could ever dream of to prepare for—and it wasn't specific to the character as much as it was in general."

Complicating matters was the fact that Tyler wasn't among the actors on set the entire time. She would shoot for a few weeks, return to the U.S. for a bit and then head back out to New Zealand. Though she got to squeeze in other work, such as a supporting role in Robert Altman's *Dr. T and the Women*, it made the *Rings* experience an exhausting affair.

"I wish I had done all my scenes in *one* big chunk of time," Tyler admits. "I didn't ever get a chance to work my way up. The guys got a chance to work together consecutively, and I didn't get that opportunity. That was a struggle for me. Sometimes I would work one day in a week, or else I would go home for two months and come back for a day. So it was confusing, but it gave me a wonderful opportunity to reflect and to see things I certainly wouldn't see on a usual movie, because they're over so quickly."

Elf Adventure

On the set itself, Tyler almost always found herself surrounded by testosterone. After all, she, Cate Blanchett as Galadriel, Miranda Otto as Eowyn and Robyn Malcolm as Morwen are just about the only ladies in the films. "Every movie I ever do, it's me and the guys," Tyler jokes. "*One Night at McCool's. Armageddon.* Pretty much every movie. Obviously, there were many women on the crew. I bonded with the costume girls, especially Ngila [*Xena*] Dickson, the costume designer. I spent a lot of time working with her and coming up with ideas for the costumes."

Though Tyler spent much of her time on set with Mortensen—"He was amazing. He *was* Aragorn for a year-and-a-half," she declares—the main man on the *Rings* set was, without question, Jackson—the latest in a long line of unique directors with whom the actress has worked. Tyler fumbles for words when attempting to compare and contrast Jackson, *Armageddon* helmer Michael Bay and Robert Altman, who directed her in *Dr. T* as well as *Cookie's Fortune*.

Tyler has been in massive productions before—she was romanced by Ben Affleck in *Armageddon*.

"It's great that I've worked with so many different directors," Tyler notes. "Every moviemaking experience is completely different. Bob, Michael and Pete are very different and not very different. They're all very talented and clear about their visions and incredibly intelligent and nice. There are some similarities between Bob and Pete in their quirkiness and the way their minds work. Their styles are different, though. And Michael has a totally different style."

Bay's SF blockbuster cast Tyler as Grace Stamper, who falls for Ben Affleck, much to the initial dismay of her father (Bruce Willis), the oil rigger who enlists Affleck to help save the world from an asteroid on a collision course with Earth. Tyler, who spent most of the film doing various degrees of hoping, praying and pleading, lent the film whatever bit of warmth it exuded.

"*Armageddon* was such a different experience," she says. "It was a huge film, which *Lord of the Rings* is too, but *Armageddon* was a different kind of big. I don't know quite how to explain it. It was a Bruce Willis movie, a SF movie, a special effects movie and a Michael Bay movie all in one. And, as I said, I was the girl again."

Switching back to the *Rings* trilogy, Tyler recalls how as a kid she often heard boys talking about *The Hobbit*, but she herself wasn't all that familiar with Tolkien's tales before stepping into the ring. "I don't know if that's a gender thing or an American thing," she wonders. "It may also be a generational thing. I know that my mother [Bebe Buell], for example, was incredibly affected by the book. They were all reading it in school and smoking pot. Then there was maybe a period of time when people didn't know about it, but now it's happening again. So many kids are being encouraged to read it in school.

"When we started on the films, I got immersed in it. I didn't have a choice but to do that," the actress reasons. "It was an enormous world to dive into. There were the books and so many books about the books, which helped. There's so much material. It's endless. You can really get lost in it. There are just so many technical elements and so many different places and names. Some people really love that. That's fun for them. Yet the stories are also very simple. They're about courage, love and friendship, all these beautiful things people relate to. Frodo is doing a big thing saving the world, but anyone can relate to that in his or her own little way while they're reading it.

"All the people on these films were incredibly passionate about Tolkien's books," Liv Tyler sums up. "One of my favorite places to go to get help was the WETA workshop [the special FX house]. All of the people Richard Taylor hired were young kids and they were all obsessed [with the books]. And they were the ones working on these creatures and creating this world. You feed off that as an actor."

Armageddon Photo: Frank Masi/Copyright 1998 Touchstone Pictures & Jerry Bruckheimer, Inc.

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